Retracting a Diagnosis of Madness:
A Reconsideration of Japanese Eccentric Art

Stephen Francis Salel

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Abstract

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Stephen Francis Salel

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Assistant Professor Cynthea J. Bogel
Department of Art History

"Eccentric art" has been a recognized category of Japanese art history since the 18th century. In an attempt to define "eccentricity" in this context, several literary studies of Japanese eccentric art are reviewed and critiqued. A careful examination of *Kinsei kijin-den* (*Biographies of Eccentrics from the Early Modern Era*) reveals its basis in religious Daoism and signs of influence by the Daoist text *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* (Ch: *Xianfo qizong*). In light of this fact, many works by well-known Japanese eccentric artists, including portraits of the Chinese monks Hanshan (Jpn: Kanzan) and Shide (Jpn: Jittoku), are re-evaluated and shown to possess Daoist significance. Based upon these findings, a Daoist definition of eccentricity is proposed. This discussion concludes with a consideration of contemporary artists influenced by the traditions of Japanese eccentric art.

An English translation of Tsuji Nobuo's *Kisô no keifu* (*The Lineage of Eccentricity*) comprises Appendix A.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to those artists who disregard tradition, cast away inhibitions, defy taboos, and risk alienation in an attempt to transcend the folly of common society.

Introduction

In the wake of several extraordinarily popular Japanese art exhibitions mounted at the beginning of the 21st century,[1] the artists known as "eccentrics" (Jpn: *kijin* 奇人) and the "eccentricity" (Jpn: *kisô* 奇想) they allegedly embody have received critical attention by art historians. The term "eccentricity" has been widely used alongside such synonyms as "individualism" (Jpn: *kojinshugi* 個人主義) since the 1960s as a way of describing in general terms both the unconventional nature of particular Japanese artists, particularly those active during the Edo period (1600-1868), and the work that they produced. Scholars seem to strongly disagree about a precise definition of "eccentricity," however: some focus upon the artists' use of exotic art techniques, others emphasize the artists'

[1] These include, among others, the Jakuchû exhibition at the Kyoto National Museum (Kyoto kokuritsu hakubutsukan) in 2000, the Rosetsu exhibition held at both the Chiba City Museum (Chiba-shi bijutsukan) and the Wakayama Prefectural Museum (Wakayama kenritsu hakubutsukan) in 2000, and the Shôhaku exhibition at the Kyoto National Museum in 2005. See the following three sources: Itô Jakuchû 伊藤若冲. *Jakuchû: tokubetsu tenrankai botsugo 200-nen: bunkazai hogohô 50-nen kinen jigyô=Jakuchû!* 『若冲：特別展覧会没後 200 年：文化財保護法 50 年記念事業= Jakuchû!』 (Kyoto: Kyoto kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2000); Nagasawa Rosetsu 長澤蘆雪; Tsuji Nobuo, ed.. *Nagasawa Rosetsu: botsugo 200-nen kinen* 『長澤蘆雪：没後 200 年記念』. (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 2000); and Soga Shôhaku 曽我蕭白. *Burai to iu yuetsu: tokubetsu tenrankai (Shôhaku Show)* 『無頼という愉悦：特別展覧会 (Shôhaku Show)』. (Kyoto: Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2005). In addition, Murakami Takashi's exhibitions from 2000 through 2001, held at various venues including the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Walker Art Center, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle, contained numerous references to Japanese eccentric art. See Murakami Takashi 村上隆. *Superflat* 『スーパーフラット』. Translated by Ted Mack. (Tokyo: Madra Publishing Co., Ltd., 2000).

creative thought process, and still others discuss the bizarre social behavior that the artists constantly display. This thesis critiques these definitions and attempts to identify the underlying characteristics of "eccentric art" as a distinct art genre.

After decades of little more than a superficial, sensational understanding about eccentricity, a number of fundamental questions remain unresolved. What degree of historical cachet do the term *kisô* and its synonyms possess? Since their earliest known usage, how have these terms been defined, and what alternative definition might more accurately reflect the goals of the artists? Perhaps the question that vexes art historians the most is whether "eccentric artists" may be grouped according to an aesthetic or ideology. This thesis addresses such questions and proposes a new interpretation of Japanese eccentric art. Although the current art historical literature defines the genre of Japanese eccentric art in myriad ways, early East Asian writings on eccentricity in tandem with the imagery produced by eccentric artists reveal an underlying glorification of idiosyncratic behavior based upon the teachings of religious Daoism, thereby indicating that the artists freely chose and actively fostered their reputations as "eccentrics."[2]

The first two chapters of this study challenge several assumptions underlying the current literature about the established art historical genre of eccentric art. Chapter One will introduce some of the most influential writings on the subject since the late 18th

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[2] The use of the term "religious Daoism" is standard in the fields of art history, religion and East Asian studies, and is typically meant to distinguish the earliest centuries of Daoist practices in China from Daoism after ca. fifth century, when Daoists first used the term *daojiao* (道教, lit, "Daoist teaching" or "Daoist religion") to describe their tradition. See Little, Stephen. *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; Berkeley: In association with University of California Press, 2000), 16-17; as well as my discussion in Chapter Three.

century, with particular attention to Tsuji Nobuo's landmark study *Kisô no keifu* 『奇想の系譜』 (*The Lineage of Eccentricity*) and the six artists with whom it deals: Iwasa Matabei (岩佐又兵衛, 1578 – 1650), Kanô Sansetsu (狩野山雪, 1590 – 1651), Itô Jakuchû (伊藤若冲, 1716-1800), Soga Shôhaku (曾我松柏, 1730-1781), Nagasawa Rosetsu (長澤芦雪, 1754-1799), and Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川国芳, 1797-1861). Tsuji and other contemporary authors have implied that the artists were motivated by no common ideology; as a direct refutation of this claim, Chapter Two focuses upon visual evidence that these artists were both aware of and inspired by the accomplishments of their eccentric predecessors and contemporaries in both China and Japan. This chapter will not only address the six artists in Tsuji's study but also two Chinese painters, Bada Shanren (八大山人; 1625-ca. 1705) and Shangguan Zhou (上官周; 1665-1750), whose work indicates that the Japanese tradition of eccentricity originated in continental Asia. The appendix of this thesis provides a full translation of Tsuji's study, which may be of interest to art historians, cultural theorists, and historians.

The next three chapters of this thesis explore an ideology that influenced the pre-modern concept of eccentricity, the teachings associated during various historical periods with religious Daoism. Chapter Three explores the earliest known Japanese text on eccentricity, *Kinsei kijin-den* 『近世奇人伝』 (*Biographies of Eccentrics from the Early Modern Era*), written in 1790 by Ban Kôkei (伴蒿蹊; 1733-1806) and Mikuma Katen (三熊花顛; 1730-1794), and focuses upon its many references to the Daoist glorification of eccentric individuals and their behavior. Among the various Daoist texts that may have

inspired Kôkei and Katen, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* (Ch: *Xianfo qizong*, 『仙仏奇踪』), an enormous, three-volume book written and illustrated in 1602 by Hong Yingming (洪應明; late 16th c. – early 17th c.), must have been readily available to the authors since several of the eccentric artists discussed by Tsuji appropriated images from it.

Chapter Four further investigates the many works with Daoist subject matter that were produced by these artists and proposes that the artists subscribed to a definition of eccentricity based upon ancient religious Daoist beliefs, according to which the artists' own idiosyncratic personalities and artistic styles were celebrated as signs of their spiritual enlightenment. Since *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* describes the eccentric Chinese monk-poet Hanshan 寒山 (Jpn: Kanzan) as not only a bodhisattva but also an immortal, Chapter Five reviews the many portraits of Hanshan and his companion Shide 拾得 (Jpn: Jittoku) produced by these artists, positing that such images are further evidence that the artists embraced a Daoist interpretation of eccentricity.

The final chapter and conclusion of this thesis assert that, long after the end of the Edo period and contrary to the assertions of certain contemporary scholars, the concept of eccentricity continued to thrive among Japanese artists. Among them was one who succeeded to some extent in articulating the Daoist basis for the genre of eccentric art. Chapter Six features the Taishô painter and art historian Kishida Ryûsei (岸田劉生, 1891-1929), who not only produced images of Hanshan, Shide, and more widely recognized Daoist immortals but also wrote extensively about Iwasa Matabei, Bada

Shanren, and the aesthetics underlying the genre of eccentric art. In closing, several contemporary Japanese artists who have found the history of eccentric art to be a source of artistic inspiration are introduced, leaving the reader to ponder whether these artists ought to be recognized as heirs to the lineage of Daoist eccentricity.

Chapter One:
Current Literature on Japanese Eccentric Art

The genre known as *kijin-den* (biographies about eccentrics) in the field of Japanese literature is commonly believed to have originated with *Kinsei kijin-den*, written by Ban Kôkei (1733-1806), illustrated by Mikuma Katen (1730-94), and originally published in Kyoto in 1790.[1] The five-volumes of the book offer portraits of roughly one hundred historical figures representing a wide range of socio-economic ranks and occupations. Though only a small handful of artists are included, such as the painters Ike no Taiga (1723-76) and Yanagisawa Kien (1704-58), they are also, at least to modern readers, among the most well-known.

The designation of *Kinsei kijin-den* as the earliest collection of biographies about eccentrics regretfully overlooks the literary sources upon which Kôkei and Katen so heavily relied. The most influential of these sources was *Okinagusa*, a text by Kanzawa Tokô (1710-95) that, although undated, is believed to have preceded Kôkei's work. Mori Senzô (森銑三, 1895-1985) has identified several biographical sketches in *Okinagusa*, including those of Ishino Gonbei and his younger brother Ichibei, that he believes Kôkei

[1] Ban Kôkei 伴蒿蹊 and Mori Senzô 森鉄三. *Kinsei kijin den* 『近世奇人伝』. (Tokyo : Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 3.

appropriated with little or no alteration.[2] As discussed in Chapter Three, the themes, illustrations, and layout design of *Kinsei kijin-den* further display the clear influence of the Chinese text *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas.*

The characters of *Kinsei kijin-den* are often believed to embody what shall be described in this thesis as "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity:" social behavior that fundamentally deviates from established norms in ways that transcend the understanding of ordinary people. As indicated by the term "intrinsic," those who subscribe to this view of eccentricity assume that such behavior is the result of biological or otherwise uncontrollable factors and that the individual's awareness of his or her deviancy is extremely limited. One biography that seems to clearly encourage an interpretation of "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity" is that of the couple Ike no Taiga and Gyokuran. (Figure 1.) The vast majority of Taiga's biography is a collection of anecdotes that illustrate bizarre and comical aspects of the artist's personality. On one occasion, he neglected to bring his brush on a journey to Nanba Province, so his wife Gyokuran followed after him with the forgotten item. When she eventually caught up with him, however, her husband appeared not to recognize her and, addressing her as a stranger, thanked her for the brush and walked away. In another instance, Taiga visited the residence of a lord in Edo. The artist lamented missing the *mikoshi-arai* festival that was being held on that day in the Gion district of Kyoto and decided to reenact the event for the benefit of his companions. He crudely constructed a doll out of scrap paper, lit a torch, and marched throughout the manor with the torch, singing boisterously. When

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[2] Ibid, 5.

Taiga refused to stop such wild behavior, the lord immediately banished him from the manor, a punishment that the artist accepted cheerfully.[3]

Kôkei was not the first to immortalize these stories and thereby label Taiga as an eccentric. When the artist died of illness in 1776, Daiten (1719-1801), the abbot of Shôkokuji temple, inscribed the following *risshi* poem on his gravestone at Jôkôji temple cemetery, which Kôkei quotes in his biography of Taiga:

> *His kimono fell into tatters, and he was satisfied with his disheveled hair. The things he said approached Zen [enlightenment], and in his appearance, he resembled a mountain hermit. He abandoned the world, but he sincerely wanted to rescue it, and he was extremely content with poverty. His room was filled with calligraphy and paintings, and there was only a small amount of space in which to sit down, but when he had a good view, he played the shamisen and enjoyed himself. No one understood his unfathomable soul. Only his name was passed on to the world of calligraphy and painting.*[4]

Although these anecdotes and testimonials indeed seem to support the understanding of Taiga's "eccentricity" as intrinsic and behavioral, doubts remain about whether Ban Kôkei and Mikuma Katen themselves interpreted his "eccentricity" in this way. In Chapter Three, *Kinsei kijin-den* will be reinterpreted according to a Daoist methodology, which evidence suggests is quite consistent with Kôkei's and Katen's personal views on eccentricity. Nevertheless, the phenomenal commercial success of

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[3] Murakami Mamoru 村上護. *Ban Kôkei sen autosaidâ 119-nin kinsei kijinden* 『伴蒿蹊撰アウトサイダー119 人近世畸人伝』. Tokyo: Hanbai kyôikusha Shuppan Sâbisu, 1981), 293-300.
[4] Ibid, 300.

Kinsei kijin-den soon prompted a veritable flood of other *kijin-den* that further perpetuated the popular view of "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity."[5]

Modern Artistic Interpretations of *Kinsei Kijin-den*
and the Development of Terminology about Eccentricity

From the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912) through the first half of the 20th century, Kôkei's enduring popularity gave rise to several collaborative art projects that paid tribute to eccentrics. In April 1893, a group of literati in Nagoya held an exhibition of quotes from the *Kinsei kijin-den* that they themselves had written by hand. Among the participating artists was Tomioka Tessai (1836-1924), who submitted several works, such as the hanging scroll "Hermits and Eccentrics," a menagerie of characters including Ike no Taiga and Gyokuran (Figures 2-3). In addition to these paintings, Tessai also assisted in the production of the exhibition catalog, designing the table of contents and title page, writing the introduction, and drawing the illustrations.

Numerous dramas regarding Kôkei's eccentrics were produced around this time as well,[6] including "Kinsei kijin-den," a light comedy by Tsubo'uchi Shôyô (1859-1935)

[5] Kôkei and Katen published a sequel, *Continued Biographies of Eccentrics in the Early Modern Era* (*Zoku kinsei kijin-den,*), 1798). Satires of their original work include *Origin of the Tea of Vengeance* (*Kataki-uchi sencha no hajimari*, 1805) and *Biographies of Beauties and the Sound of the Koto* (*Kinsei bijin-den* 琴声美人伝, 1816) both by Santô Kyôden (1761-1816). *Kijin-den* written in *hentai kanbun* (a Japanese variation of classical Chinese) include *Biographies of Three Famous Masters* (*Sanmei shiten*, 1828) by Nagano Hôzan (1783-1837), *Kinsei Sôgo* (1838) and *Zoku Kinsei Sôgo* (1845) by Tsunoda Kyûka (1783-1855), *Yashi* (n.d.) by Iida Tadahiko (1799-1860), *Kôkoku Meiiden* (1851) by Asada Sôhaku (1813-94), and *Kinsei Ijinden* (1877) by Gamô Keitei (1833-1901). In the field of poetry, works inspired by Kôkei's and Katen's publication include *Songs of the Eccentrics* (*Kijin'ei*, 1798) by Okada Shinsen (1737-99), *One Hundred Waka Poems about Eccentrics* (*Hyakunin isshu kijin*, 1852) by Ryokutei Senryû (1787-1858), and *Shinobu Noyakashû* (n.d.) Tachibana Akemi (1812-1868). See Mori, 5-7.

that focuses upon Yanagisawa Kien and Ike no Taiga. The casual air of this piece that Shôyô finally staged in July 1929 belies the author's initial, ambitious goals, the period of ten years over which he intermittently revised the script, and the efforts of his colleague, the historian Mitamura Engyô (1870-1952), to research the character's lifestyles and domestic circumstances.[7]

Shôyô is cited in the *Nihon kokugo daijiten* dictionary for the earliest known usage and possible coinage of the term *kisô* 奇想, which since the late 20th century has become extremely prevalent in literature on Japanese eccentric art.[8] Though the word is now commonly translated as "eccentricity," an analysis of these early usages indicates a slightly different meaning. In his celebrated exposition on modern literature, *The Essence of the Novel* (*Shôsetsu shinzui*, 1885-6), the author states:

> ***... the heart of a novel is entirely its emotional resonance. The novel must skillfully weave together human emotions with a thread of profound*** **kisô**. ***It bears the responsibility of beautifully weaving together limitless, unusual sources in order to create equally infinite effects, to paint an image, and to reveal what the reader longs to know, such as the mysteries of causation in this world.***[9]

The next known appearance of the term is in a work by Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959), one of the Meiji-era novelists towards whom Shôyô's book was directed. In *Haikai Poet*

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[6] Ibid, 6. These dramas include "Gion Hyakugô," (n.d.) by Takayasu Gekkô (1868-1944), which portrayed Gyokuran and her mother, "The Individual Izenbô" ("Kojin Izenbô," n.d.) by Nunami Keion (1877-1927), and "Ike no Taiga the Eccentric" ("Kijin Taigadô," 1927) by Tsumura Kyôson (1893-1937).

[7] Tsubo'uchi Shôyô 坪内逍遥, *Kinsei kijin-den sono ta* 『近世畸人傳その他』. (Tokyo: Tokyodo, 1931), 194-200.

[8] *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 『日本国語大辞典』. Volume 5. (Shôgakukan, 1976), 595.

[9] Tsubo'uchi Shôyo, *Shôsetsu shinzui* 『小説神髄』. (Tokyo: Iwanami bunkô, 1936), 31-2.

(*Haikai-shi*, 1909), Kyoshi describes the interaction between the protagonist and his students:

> *As always, when our conversation comes to a halt, he writes another verse. Today Mizuki struggles with unusual diligence, but he nevertheless seems unable to compose smoothly. It takes him about two hours, and upon looking at the finished products, they're just terrible, as if someone else had written them. When Mikura asks me which of them are good, I indicate a few, saying, "Among all, these are the best." Actually, though, the poems lack the* kisô *they usually have, and they become mired in places that ordinarily would not present difficult to [Mizuki].*[10]

Particularly noteworthy aspects of these two quotes are their literary contexts and the fact that *kisô* is defined as a stylistic quality rather than a personality trait. Accordingly, the *kisô* of Shôyo and Kyoshi can be glossed specifically as *odd, whimsical ingenuity displayed in the production of prose or poetry*.

By the interwar period, the term *kisô* had transcended the context of literature and was being used in the discussion of visual art. *History of Japanese Painting in the Early Modern Era* (*Nihon kaiga kinsei-shi*, 1944) by Wakita Hidetarô (1906-81) discusses a painting by Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754-1799) in the following way:

> *"Mount Hôrai" in the collection of Morikawa Yûshô of Hiroshima: Some paintings by Rosetsu, filled with brilliant* kisô, *are slightly too wild and fierce, but this picture has a witty composition and brushwork as well as a refreshing lightheartedness. This is particularly evident in such elements as his peculiar depiction of waves at the bottom that display his manual dexterity yet maintain an eternally stylish appearance.*[11]

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[10] Takahama Kyoshi 高濱虚子. *Haikai-shi*『俳諧師』In *Teihon Takahama Kyoshi zenshû*『定本高濱虚子全集』. Volume 5. (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1974), 235.

[11] Wakita Hidetarô 脇田秀太郎. *Nihon kaiga kinseishi*『日本絵画近世史』. (Osaka: Shôbunkan, 1944), 261.

Wakita's use of the term *kisô* seems generally consistent with that of Shôyo and Kyoshi; it again describes *odd, whimsical ingenuity*. Ironically, this quote appears in a chapter about the Maruyama-Shijô school of painting. While an earlier chapter entitled "Three Unusual Geniuses of the Mid-Edo Period" discusses the work of Soga Shôhaku (1730-1781) and Itô Jakuchû (1716-1800), they are referred to with other expressions connoting eccentricity such as *kiheki* 奇癖 and *kishu* 奇趣.[12] Not until the 1960s, it seems, was *kisô* used to demarcate eccentric art as a distinct genre, a phenomenon similar to the appearance of the term "Zen art" in Europe and the United States a few decades earlier.

"The Eccentricity of Kuniyoshi"

Suzuki Jûzô's (b. 1919) article "The Eccentricity of Kuniyoshi" ("*Kuniyoshi no kisô*"), published in the art journal *Hôshun* in August 1965, played a significant role in reviving the discussion of Japanese eccentric art in the era following the Pacific War. Suzuki proposes an understanding of eccentricity quite unlike that of Ban Kôkei. Denoted here as "technical eccentricity," Suzuki's use of the term *kisô* is strictly limited to the field of fine art and focuses upon the adoption of unconventional and exotic art techniques that later enjoyed popularity among practitioners of *yôga* (western-style oil painting) half a century later.

According to Suzuki's article, one indication of Kuniyoshi's "technical eccentricity" is his experimentation and ultimate command of linear perspective. As an early example of one of the artist's earliest attempts to employ it, Suzuki presents

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[12] Ibid, 246-252.

"Ômiya Akihiko" (Figure 4), which depicts a courtesan relaxing in an interior setting and bathing in the moonlight that streams in through a latticed window.[13] The shadow of the figure cast upon the tatami has an ordinary shape, but the shadow of the window lattice behind her radiates dramatically as if the moon were mere meters away. In contrast to this ambitious yet awkwardly constructed image, Suzuki next describes "Chushingura, Scene 11: the Night Raid" (Figure 5), which, though produced only a few years later, displays a much more thorough understanding of the rules of western perspective. The horizon line has been lowered, and architectural structures are convincingly shown receding towards a single vanishing point on the horizon. "The combination of figures portrayed in the conventional Utagawa ukiyo-e style with a western-style draftsmanship," Suzuki notes, "displays a bizarre fusion and radiates a particular exoticism."[14] As an artist trained in the Utagawa school, one might argue, Kuniyoshi's use of "an ukiyo-e style" is inevitable; what Suzuki is primarily concerned with is the artist's interest in western methods of art production.

Another aspect that Suzuki finds indicative of Kuniyoshi's "bountiful eccentricity" was the artist's revolutionary approach to pictorial format. From the Kôka era (1844-48) through the early Kaei era (1848-54), Kuniyoshi produced ôban triptychs, but rather than dividing the imagery so that each sheet could be appreciated as an independent image, as print artists had customarily done up until that time, he stretched a single, panoramic scene across all three sheets. To further accentuate the dramatic

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[13] The following six paragraphs are a summary of Suzuki Jûzô 鈴木重三, "Kuniyoshi no kisô," 「国芳の奇想」, *Hôshun* 『萌春』 145 (August 1965): 1-6.
[14] Ibid, 2.

grandeur of these works, Kuniyoshi included within that scene an enormous object that by itself spanned multiple sheets. In "The Rescue of Minamoto no Tametomo by Goblins" (Figure 6), for example, Kuniyoshi extends the image of a monstrous alligator-shark (Jpn: *wanizane*) across the entire picture plane. Suzuki refers to this format as "wide-screen" (Jpn: *waido sukuriin*), making obvious reference to a dominant art form in modern western culture.

In his constant search for novel imagery that he could incorporate into his works and shock his viewers, Kuniyoshi drew upon various visual sources from both Europe and Japan. The silhouettes of vengeful ghosts that fill the night sky in the background of "The Ghosts of the Heike at Daimotsu-no-ura" ("Daimotsu no Ura Heike no bôrei," Figure 7) were derived from "Twilight," a scene in *The Illustrated Night Parade of Demons* (*Hyakki Yakô*, Figure 8), designed by Toriyama Sekien (1712-1788) and originally published sometime in the late 18th century. Nevertheless, Suzuki maintains, Kuniyoshi's depiction, bolstered by his command of western art techniques, far surpassed the imagination of his predecessors.

The Lineage of Eccentricity

In late 1968, upon the heels of Suzuki's "The Eccentricity of Kuniyoshi" came a series of articles by Tsuji Nobuo (b. 1932) entitled *The Lineage of Eccentricity* (Jpn: *Kisô no keifu*). Expanded and published as a single volume the following year, this work

quickly developed its reputation as a seminal study of Japanese eccentric art.[15] In the book's conclusion, the author lists several artists who he believes share a similar artistic sensibility: Sesson (b. 1504), Kanô Eitoku (1543-1590), Tawaraya Sôtatsu (active ca. 1602-30), Ogata Kôrin (1658-1716), Hakuin Ekaku (1685-1768), Ike Taiga (1723-76), Uragami Gyokudô (1745-1820), Okada Beisanjin (1744-1820), Tôshûsai Sharaku (act. ca. 1794), and Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849).[16] As archetypical *kijin* representative of these various artists, Tsuji mainly focuses upon six individuals: the painters Iwasa Matabei (1578 – 1650), Kanô Sansetsu (1590 – 1651), Itô Jakuchû, Soga Shôhaku, and Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754-1799), as well as the print artist Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861).

Regarding his definition of the term *kisô*, Tsuji states:

> ... *after searching here and there for a precise term that would accurately throw into relief the personality trait commonly shared by [the artists discussed in this book], I stumbled upon the work* kisô *which, regardless of the degree of eccentricity [Jpn:* ekisentorikku*], encompasses all of those free, original ideas that tear away at the husk of artistic convention.*[17]

Though "free, original ideas that tear away at the husk of artistic convention" closely parallels the odd, whimsical ingenuity about which Shôyô, Kyoshi, and Wakita wrote, and though Tsuji's focus upon Edo pictorial art further brings to mind the theory of technical eccentricity discussed in Suzuki's essay, Tsuji's reference to personality traits undeniably evokes an"intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity" similar to that posited by Ban

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[15] Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* 『奇想の系譜：又兵衛—国芳』 (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 137.
[16] Ibid, 137-8.
[17] Ibid, 137.

Kôkei's *Kinsei kijin-den*, an interpretation that Tsuji forcefully emphasized in a statement he added to the 1988 Pelican reprinting of his book:

> *I have now become interested in regarding what we call* kisô... *as a major characteristic of the timeless ability of the Japanese people to artistically express themselves.*[18]

Accordingly, although the author reveals a multi-faceted understanding of the term *kisô*, he seems most interested in exploring the fundamentally deviant, mysterious social behavior displayed by the artists he discusses. A brief examination of each of the monographs devoted to the six artists featured in his book highlights his tack.

Iwasa Matabei

Signs of Matabei's social deviance are immediately apparent in his attraction to scenes of grotesque violence. One such scene is the climax of "The Tale of Horie" (Figure 9), in which a young warrior seeks revenge against those responsible for the death of his parents. His assault is depicted as a chaotic frenzy in which soldiers are

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[18] Yajima Arata 矢島新, Yamashita Yûji 山下裕二, Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄, *Nihon bijutsu no hakkenshatachi* 『日本美術の発見者たち』 (Tokyo: Daigaku shuppankai, 2003), 43. This revision by Tsuji, like other 20th century writings on Japanese aesthetics, such as Kuki Shûzô's 1930 essay, now published as Kuki Shûzô, Matsui Sakuko; John Clark. *Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki.* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1997), stresses Japanese uniqueness and cultural traits in a mode of discourse that has come to be known as *nihonjin-ron* 日本人論 ("discourse on the Japanese" or "Japanese essentialism"). To varying degrees, *nihonjin-ron* excludes the notion of socio-historical diversity and promotes a kind of cultural nationalism. Dale, Peter N.. *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness.* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), Befu, Harumi and Kazufumi Manabe. *An Empirical Study of Nihonjinron: How Real is the Myth?* (Nishinomiya, Japan: Kwansei Gakuin University, 1987), and Yoshino, Kosaku. *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan: A Sociological Enquiry.* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992) discuss *nihonjin-ron* specific to its effect on social and political conformity, but their analyses are entirely applicable to the art historical discussion presented in this thesis. Since it would be tangential to the objectives of this thesis, a thorough discussion of *nihonjin-ron* is not possible here, but it is important to identify the fact that Tsuji and other scholars have promoted this ideology through their description of "eccentricity" as a uniquely Japanese trait.

being decapitated and body parts lie scattered upon the battlefield.[19] Scenes of bloodshed such as the murder of Tokiwa and her lady chamberlain in "Tokiwa in the Mountains" (Figure 10) are further accentuated by the preposterously slow, moment-by-moment pace at which Matabei leads the viewer through the events.[20] Tsuji implies a direct connection between such brutal imagery and the artist's own tragic childhood. Matabei's father, Governor Araki Murashige, had plotted a revolt against Lord Nobunaga, and in retaliation, Nobunaga ordered the public execution of Araki's wife and more than thirty children, a fate from which the infant Matabei narrowly escaped.[21] Therefore, the reader is led to assume, Matabei did not consciously decide to depict violent scenes; rather, a psychological obsession about violence that plagued the artist since his infancy compelled him to paint such images.

Kanô Sansetsu

The author represents Sansetsu as a social recluse, stating, "He detested having to deal with the common world; he was the type of person who would shut himself away in his house and think only about painting."[22] Tsuji emphasizes this personality trait by focusing upon a letter written by the aged Sansetsu from prison to his son Einô. The content of the letter is relatively unimportant; the author is more concerned with the reasons for Sansetsu's incarceration, speculating that the artist may have been innocent of any crime and had met such a fate merely because of his unusual personality:

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[19] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 15.
[20] Ibid, 11.
[21] Ibid, 25.
[22] Ibid, 50.

> *It is thought to be a rather ironic conclusion that his unworldly nature might have led him to get tripped up in some worldly situation. Not only that, but he may also have had a narrow-mindedness that caused others to misunderstand and despise him. One thing that causes me to presume this is the imagery in his artwork.*[23]

Tsuji proceeds to analyze three stages in the evolution of Sansetsu's work, implying that, as the artist becomes more socially withdrawn, his imagery, symbolizing his own psychological state, becomes increasingly idiosyncratic. The pair of folding screens "Dragon and Tiger," which are thought to have been painted around the 1620s, is indicative of the initial stage. Tsuji focuses primarily upon the left screen (Figure 11), commenting upon the "stiff, eccentric drawing style" and the "slimy, fantastic form" of the tiger. Indeed, the posture of the animal is rather unnatural: its front legs are locked together as if they have merged to become a single limb, and its spine bends sharply at its shoulders, so that the viewer sees its face in a three-quarter view from the left while simultaneously seeing its trunk and hind legs in profile from the right. The slimy quality to which Tsuji refers is largely due to the clarity of the tiger's stripes, as if the tiger was perfectly smooth rather than covered with hair. The serpentine shape of those stripes is echoed by the animal's contour, particularly that of its dramatically arched back and its wildly twisting, preposterously long tail.[24]

The second phase of Sansetsu's stylistic development is seen in two sets of sliding door paintings located at Tenkyûin temple and dated to around 1631. One set, a section of "Tiger amidst Bamboo" (Figure 12), was revealed by Minamoto Yoshihiro to be based

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[23] Ibid, 53.
[24] Ibid, 55.

upon surprisingly formalist concerns. The three right panels, he explains, form a square, and ninety-degree diagonals stretching from corner to corner define the boundaries of most of the imagery. The other work, "Pheasant in a Plum Tree" (Figure 13), similarly displays what Tsuji refers to as "a monomaniacal force… intent upon enforcing a geometric order" upon the titular tree, forcing it into an awkward posture as if it were an enormous bonzai.[25] Although the objects depicted are from nature, Tsuji stresses, the artist denies their natural appearance and instead infuses them with a strange, reptilian feeling.

The development of Sansetsu's eccentricity culminates in "Old Plum Tree" (Figure 14), a sliding-door painting at Tenshôin dated to circa 1646. Here the artist revises the imagery from "Pheasant in a Plum Tree," dramatically stretching and distorting it in a way that Tsuji considers expressionistic and angst-ridden. In the author's eyes, "the tree's ash-green trunk rises and falls, bends and convulses amidst the brilliance of the gilding just like an enormous flightless dragon writhing and tossing about."[26] Later, he compares this prunus to a body flailing in the throes of death, as if to imply that the artist's stylistic development as well as his psychological deterioration has reached a terminal state.[27]

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[25] Ibid, 56.
[26] Ibid, 58.
[27] Ibid, 60.

Itô Jakuchû

Like Sansetsu, Ito Jakuchû's reputation as an eccentric is largely based upon his introversion. As the eldest son in his family, Jakuchû had inherited the greengrocery that his parents had managed, but he expressed little interest in such work, focusing his attentions instead upon his personal spiritual development and painting. In his thirties, he passed responsibility for the business to his younger brother and, financially supported by his family, devoted himself thereafter to religion and fine art.[28]

Tsuji offers an interpretation of Jakuchû's artwork that is very reminiscent of the Kanô painter, implying that his unconventional imagery indicates the degree to which his self-isolation distorted his visual perception. Though the artist has been hailed as a pioneer of *shaseiga* (paintings made from direct observation), when compared to the bird-and-flower paintings of Maruyama Ôkyo, Jakuchû's are surprisingly lacking in anatomical accuracy. An extreme example of this deformation is "Cacti and Fowl" (Figure 15) at Saifukuji temple, in which the artist incorporated images of exotic cacti that he had seen in the botanical collection of the wealthy merchant Yoshino Kansei V. The strange, amorphous structure of the cacti is echoed by the bodies of the chickens, each of which has, with the exception of its head and legs, been simplified into a collage of abstract patterns.[29]

In the negative space surrounding Jakuchû's chickens and other subjects, the viewer can often detect the presence of an invisible yet physically palpable ether not entirely unlike what Tsuji described as a "monomaniacal force" contorting the trees in

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[28] Ibid, 65.
[29] Ibid, 72.

Sansetsu's paintings. In Jakuchû's works, however, this ether is often quite serene and merely functions as a medium in which objects leisurely float. "Shellfish" (Figure 16), a still-life from the artist's well-known *Dôshoku Sai-e* series, for example, displays a myriad of crustaceans and other forms of aquatic life, but the fairly even distribution of these objects throughout the composition as well as the simple, monochromatic description of the background strips the image of a sense of gravity. Accordingly, it is impossible to determine whether the organisms are lying on the sea floor below the viewer or whether they are shown from the side being tossed about in the unseen ocean current.[30]

Soga Shôhaku

Quoting various sources, Tsuji portrays Shôhaku as a derelict and misanthrope who took constant delight in shocking and offending those around him. While in Ise, he was supposedly drunk all the time, and he aimlessly traveled throughout the city by hitching rides on the back of palanquins. *Tales of the Hôreki Era*, published by Mori Kosen (1743-1848), claims that his general behavior was so unacceptable that he was occasionally denied service when visiting shops.[31]

Echoing the judgment by Nakabayashi Chikudô (1776-1853), who concluded that Shôhaku's work established "perversion" as a new category of painting,[32] Tsuji proposes that the artist felt compelled to offend viewers through his paintings. One means by

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[30] Ibid, 67-8.
[31] Ibid, 88-9.
[32] Ibid, 99-100.

which the artist accomplishes this task, Tsuji contends, was his disturbingly garish palette of colors. "Sessan Dôji Offering his Life to an Ogre" (Figure 17) exemplifies this provocative style: the cobalt blue of the demon's skin and the scarlet red of Sessan Dôji's skirt convey the dramatic significance of Sessan's impending decision to leap down and sacrifice himself to the beast. Moreover, the vulgarity of these colors allude to the horror of Sessan's imminent slaughter.[33] Even in monochromatic ink paintings such as "Hanshan and Shide" (Figure 18), Tsuji implies that the artist's brushwork conveys intense contempt for the viewer. "In terms of grotesquerie," the author remarks, "these works cannot be compared to any others in the history of Japanese figurative painting..."[34]

Nagasawa Rosetsu

Nagasawa Rosetsu's reputation as an eccentric seems to be based primarily upon a small body of literature produced in the Taishô and early Showa period. Of chief importance among these documents is "The Tale of Rosetsu" (*Rosetsu monogatari*), an article published by Aimi Kôû (相見香雨, 1874 - 1970) in 1918 and based upon interviews with the painter Takegawa Tomohiro (active ca. 1867), a relative of Rosetsu. According to "The Tale of Rosetsu," Rosetsu possessed distain for authority figures and a deep need for personal attention, and both of these factors often incited him to commit pranks and provoke fights with his fellow artists. While studying under Maruyama Ôkyo

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[33] Ibid, 91.
[34] Ibid, 94.

as a youth, Rosetsu was apparently expelled from his teacher's workshop three times for incidents of insolent behavior. In one of these incidents, Rosetsu took a *tehon* (sample sketch) drawn by the teacher and, falsely stating that he had produced it himself, submitted it to Ôkyo and asked him to critique it. The deceived master then preceded to unwittingly criticize the drawing and indicate several problematic areas.[35] Summing up his impression of these incidents, Tsuji judges Rosetsu to be "a slightly more vulgar version of Shôhaku."[36]

Aimi, as quoted by Tsuji, argues that Rosetsu's mischievous behavior may have led to various personal tragedies, including his death at the young age of 45. Aimi presents various theories on why Rosetsu died, including the possibilities that he was poisoned or committed suicide.[37] None of the explanations proposed have considerable historical merit, but at the very least, when considered together, they clearly convey Rosetsu's reputation as a self-destructive anti-hero.

The subtle humor found in many of Rosetsu's images expresses the artist's penchant for mischief. "Tiger" (Figure 19) at Muryôji temple, undoubtedly Rosetsu's most famous work, exemplifies this wit. The creature is shown in the act of pouncing upon its prey, and the enormous scale of the work imbues it with a ferocious, threatening presence. Tsuji notes, however, that if its size were disregarded, the viewer would immediately realize that the painting depicts nothing more than a common housecat.[38]

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[35] Ibid, 108.
[36] Ibid, 111.
[37] Ibid, 110.
[38] Ibid, 112-3.

Towards the end of his life, Rosetsu developed a strong interest in the paintings of Shôhaku, and either because of his interest in Shôhaku's grotesque sensibility or because he hoped to achieve the same degree of fame, Rosetsu began to produce works such as "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman" (Figure 20) that capture the expressionistic style of his predecessor.[39] Never abandoning the techniques he had acquired under Maruyama Ôkyô, however, he distorts the figure's appearance in an entirely naturalistic way and creates an unsettling mood by emphasizing signs of her advanced age, notably her wrinkled skin and withered facial features (Figure 21).

Utagawa Kuniyoshi

Most of Tsuji's comments about Kuniyoshi's work were appropriated from Suzuki Jûzô's "The Eccentricity of Kuniyoshi."[40] The original scholarship with which Tsuji supplements Suzuki's ideas regards the subversive nature of Kuniyoshi's imagery and the artist's activity as a political satirist. In the twelfth year of the Tenpô era (1841), Mizuno Tadakuni, an assistant to shôgun Tokugawa Ieyoshi, developed the infamous Tenpô Reforms which, among other social regulations, strictly regulated the production of ukiyo-e and prohibited print artists from depicting or mentioning any historical character since the Tenshô era (1573-92). At the time of their production, some of Kuniyoshi's works were believed to flagrantly disregard this law.[41]

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[39] Ibid, 116-7.
[40] Tsuji's debt to Suzuki is apparent when comparing Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970),121-129 and Ibid, 133-135 to Suzuki, "Kuniyoshi no kisô."
[41] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 131.

Although the impetus for political art is naturally found in its social context, Tsuji again focuses upon the artist's personality. While determining whether Kuniyoshi ought to be charged with sedition for political references in his prints, a group of investigators (*inmitsu* 隠密) produced the following sketch of his personality:

> *... despite being an important figure in the world of ukiyo-e, he maintains a vulgar appearance. He has a frank temperament, and if he is interested in a request by a publisher, he will undertake the project regardless of the amount of the pay, but if he is not interested, no matter how enticing the conditions may be, he will turn the offer down. He has relatively few worldly desires.*[42]

Curiously, Tsuji compares the artist's personality to that of the many cats that he raised and portrayed in his prints. At the beginning of the monograph, Tsuji quotes Uchida Roan's (内田魯庵, 1868-1929) description of cats as amoral, playful, and unattached to worldly possessions.[43] In the conclusion, Tsuji reiterates:

> *Kuniyoshi dearly loved his cats' self-centered impudence and their complete disregard for humans. I believe this fact offers many insights into his personality and artwork. Perhaps his admiration for the obstinacy of cats was also reflected in his attitude about the satire prints that caused him so much trouble with the military government.*[44]

One such print was "The Earth Spider Manifesting Demons in the Mansion of Minamoto no Yorimitsu" (Figure 22), which depicts general Minamoto no Yorimitsu (948-1021) watched over by the Four Heavenly Guardians and surrounded by an innumerable legion of threatening goblins. Many viewers interpreted the work as a subtle

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[42] Ibid, 133.
[43] Ibid, 121.
[44] Ibid, 135.

criticism of the current censorship, seeing Yorimitsu as Ieyoshi, one of the Heavenly Guardians as Tadakuni, and the goblins as furious Edo print dealers. In reaction to this work, Kuniyoshi was interrogated and harassed by government officials for several years.[45] Nevertheless, the artist continued to produce such images, and in Tsuji's opinion, the almost inhuman degree of obstinacy that underlay and motivated this dangerous conduct was an expression of eccentricity. Furthermore, much like that expressed through Matabei's obsession with violence, Sansetsu's and Jakuchû's introversion, Shôhaku's compulsion to offend his viewers, and Rosetsu's mischievous nature, Tsuji forcefully emphasized that this eccentricity of Kuniyoshi was "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity."

Summary

The literature that has been presented in this chapter can be organized chronologically in order to offer a rough idea of how the concept of eccentricity may have evolved within Japan:

[45] Ibid, 131.

Table 1: Aspects of "Eccentricity"

Date	Author	Publication	Original Term	Definition or Characterization of Term
1790	Ban Kôkei	*Kinsei kijin den (Biographies of Eccentrics from the Early Modern Era)*	*Ki*	"Intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity"
1885-6	Tsubo'uchi Shôyô	*Shôsetsu no shinzui (The Essence of the Novel)*	*Kisô*	Odd, whimsical ingenuity
1909	Takahama Kyoshi	*Haikai-shi (Haikai Poet)*		
1944	Wakita Hidetarô	*Nihon kaiga kinsei-shi (History of Japanese Painting in the Early Modern Era)*		
1965	Suzuki Jûzô	"Kuniyoshi no kisô" ("The Eccentricity of Kuniyoshi")		"Technical eccentricity"
1968	Tsuji Nobuo	*Kisô no keifu (The Lineage of Eccentricity)*		"Intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity"

An unfortunate omission in much of the literature presented in this chapter regards the art historical awareness of Japanese eccentric artists. The theory of "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity" posits that the artists were motivated almost entirely by their own individual personality traits and assumes that the artists were unaware or unconcerned with the existence of their eccentric contemporaries and predecessors. As discussed in Chapter Two, these beliefs are contradicted by a surprisingly vast amount of art historical evidence, thereby demanding an alternative definition for the term "eccentricity."

Figure 1. Mikuma Katen, Illustration of Ike no Taiga and Gyokuran. From *Kinsei kijin-den*, 1790, ink on paper.

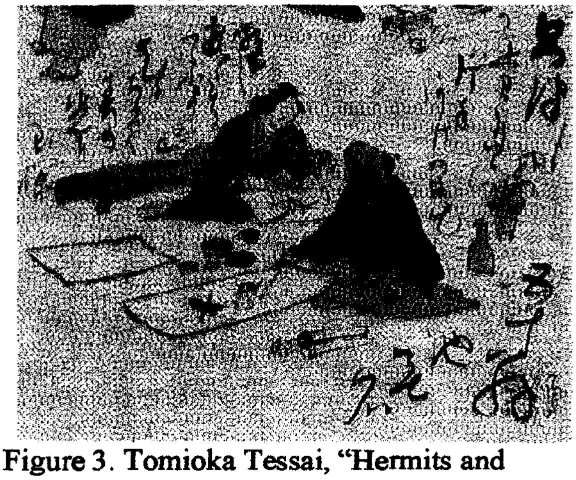

Figure 3. Tomioka Tessai, "Hermits and Eccentrics," detail: Ike no Taiga and Gyokuran; n.d., ink and color on paper, Tekkai Museum of Art, Takarazuka City, Japan.

Figure 2. Tomioka Tessai, "Hermits and Eccentrics," n.d., ink and color on paper, Tekkai Museum of Art, Takarazuka City, Japan.

Figure 4. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Ômiya Monhiko," ca. 1825-30, ink and color on paper, ôban (37.8 x 25.8 cm), private collection.

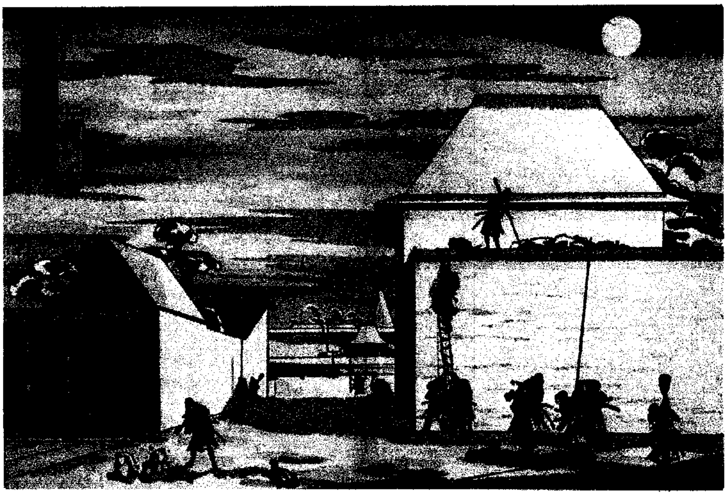

Figure 5. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "The Night Raid," Scene 11 of the *Chushingura* series, ca. 1830-5, ink and color on paper, ôban (25.8 x 37.8 cm), Kobe Municipal Art Museum.

Figure 6. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "The Rescue of Minamoto no Tametomo by Goblins," 1851, ink and color on paper, ôban triptych (37.8 x 77.4 cm), Suzuki Jûzô collection.

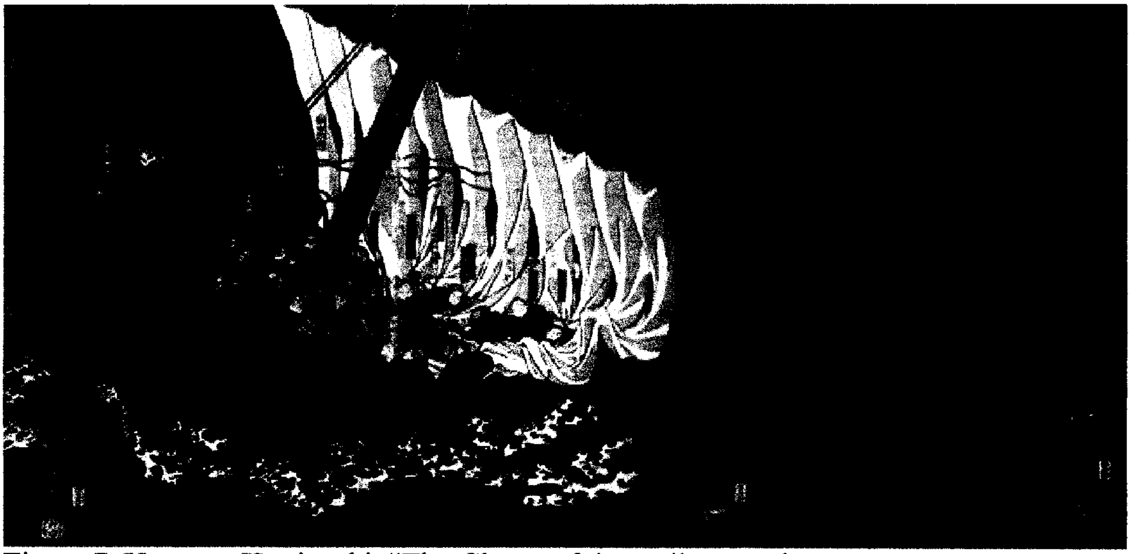

Figure 7. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "The Ghosts of the Heike at Daimotsu-no-ura," ca. 1853, ink and color on paper, ôban triptych (38 x 76.5 cm), private collection.

Figure 8. Copy of Toriyama Sekien, *The Illustrated Night Parade of Demons* (*Hyakki yakô*), detail: twilight (*ômagatoki*), ink on paper, original: ca. late 18th century.

Figure 9. Iwasa Matabei, "The Tale of Horie," detail: Tarô's assault; late 16th – early 17th century, color and ink on paper, handscroll, 33.5 x ca. 1350 cm, Furumori collection.

Figure 10. Iwasa Matabei, "Tokiwa in the Mountains," detail: Tokiwa and her lady chamberlain assaulted by thieves, late 16th – early 17th century, ink and color on paper, 34.2 x 1260 cm, MOA Atami.

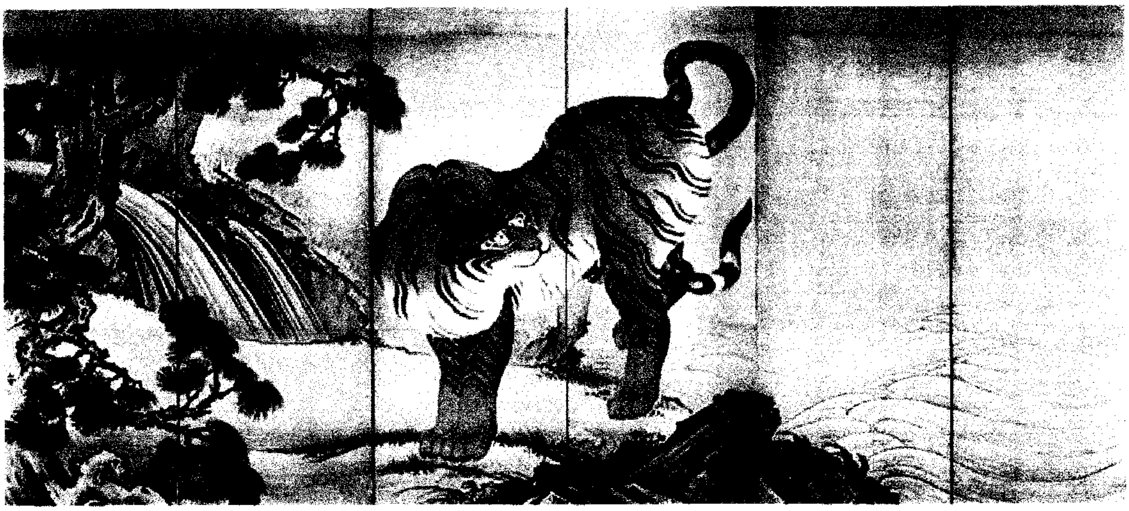

Figure 11. Kanô Sansetsu, "Dragon and Tiger," detail: left screen; ink and color on paper, Yoshimura collection.

Figure 12. Kanô Sansetsu, "Tiger amidst Bamboo," detail of the north side of the installation, ink, color and gold on paper, Tenkyûin temple.

Figure 13. Kanô Sansetsu, "Pheasant in a Plum Tree," ink, color and gold on paper, Tenkyûin temple.

Figure 14. Kanô Sansetsu, "Old Plum Tree," ink, color and gold on paper, Tenshôin temple.

Figure 15. Itô Jakuchû, "Fowl and Cacti," detail: left half, 1790, ink, color and gold on paper, 177.2 x 92.2 cm each, Saifukuji temple, Osaka Prefecture.

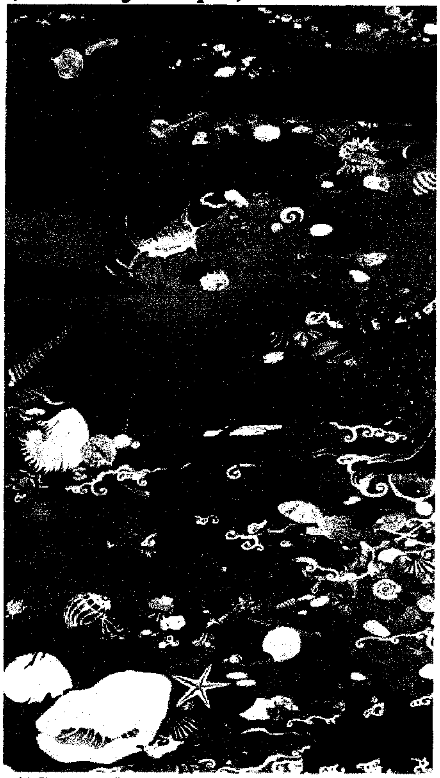

Figure 16. Itô Jakuchû, "Shellfish," from *Dôshoku Sai-e* series; ink and color on paper, Imperial Household Collection.

Figure 17. Soga Shôhaku, "Sessan Dôji Offering his Life to an Ogre," detail: right screen; ca. 1764, ink and color on paper, 169.8 x 124.8 cm, Keishôji temple, Matsusaka City.

Figure 18. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: right scroll (Shide); ca. 1761-2, ink on paper, 197.0 x 115.0 cm each, Kôshôji temple.

Figure 19. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Tiger," ink on paper, Muryôji Temple.

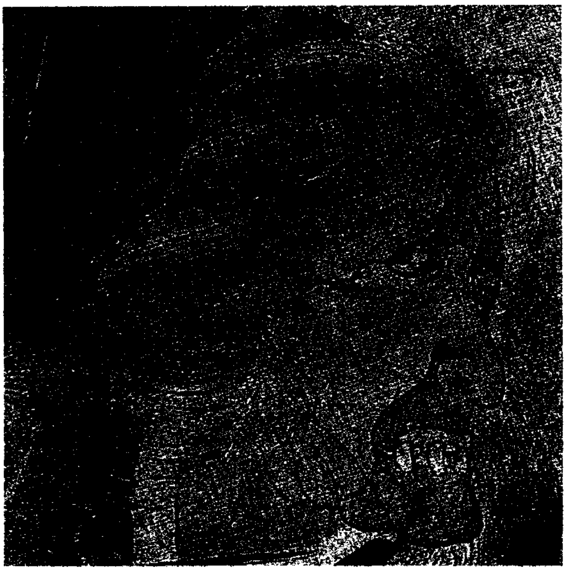

Figure 20. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman," 1797, ink and color on paper, 150 x 83 cm, Itsukushima Shrine Museum, Hiroshima Prefecture.

Figure 21. Nagasawa Rosetsu, detail of Figure 20.

Figure 22. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "The Earth Spider Manifesting Demons in the Mansion of Minamoto no Yorimitsu," 1843, ink and color on paper, ôban triptych, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Chapter Two:
Evidence of Formal Influence upon the Works of Japanese Eccentric Artists

Though the current literature on Japanese eccentricity has provided works by artists such as Itô Jakuchû with a convenient theoretical framework, the historical inaccuracies of that scholarship, particularly the way in which eccentric art is defined, demand attention. Among the various definitions of eccentricity presented in the previous chapter, the one that has come to be most widely accepted by scholars comprises the traits that characterize "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity:" social behavior that noticeably deviates from established norms as a result of biological abnormalities or similarly uncontrollable factors of which the individual himself is at best only dimly aware. In addition, several of the aforementioned scholars have limited the geographic scope of their research to the Japanese archipelago, and Tsuji Nobuo has even declared that *kisô* is a fundamentally Japanese trait.[1] These interpretations of eccentricity are inconsistent with information about the art historical awareness of those individuals who Tsuji portrays in *Kisô no keifu*. Soga Shôhaku, Itô Jakuchû, Nagasawa Rosetsu and Utagawa Kuniyoshi have all imitated the works of other Japanese eccentrics, and among them, Jakuchû and Shôhaku indicate that these artists were additionally inspired by the work of Chinese eccentric artists.

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[1] See the discussion of nihonjin-ron in Chapter One, footnote 18.

Evidence of Influence among the Japanese Eccentrics

A comparative visual analysis of works by the artists discussed in *Kisô no keifu* offers surprisingly strong support for the claim that, beginning with Soga Shôhaku, the artists were indeed aware of the accomplishments of their eccentric contemporaries and predecessors. Shôhaku's portrait of Hitomaro, a relatively late work in his oeuvre painted around 1767, is clearly based upon an image of the same poet by Matabei (Figures 23-24). In both works, the figure is shown in three-quarter view in the lower right corner of the scroll, tilting his head slightly back, gazing upwards, and smiling comically. Though Shôhaku has added more realistic detail to the face, the figures, both of whose top-heavy hats and white robes are described with brief, calligraphic brushstrokes, are essentially identical.

In other works, Shôhaku also demonstrates his deep familiarity with the paintings of Kanô Sansetsu. In his "Immortals" screens, one of the daughters of Xiwangmu (Japanese: Seiôbô), Queen Mother of the East, is depicted in profile standing beside her and holding in both hands a tray at chest height. Upon the tray lie a cluster of peaches, still attached to a bit of branch covered with healthy, green leaves. The tips of the leaves radiate like flames around each peach. The woman's outfit is a simple robe with the ends of her belt tied together in a bow behind her knees. In these ways, the figure is the mirror

image of the same character found in Sansetsu's "Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West and Mu Wang Screen."[2] (Figures 25-26.)

Shôhaku's "Lion Dog and Tiger" is a veritable homage to his eccentric forefathers. The creature in the right screen, because of the angle of its face, the manic expression in its bulging eyes, the particular arrangement of its protruding fangs, and its exaggerated whiskers, has also been described as an appropriation of Matabei's "Tiger."[3] (Figures 27-28.) The tiger depicted in Shôhaku's left screen, meanwhile, undeniably originated from the previously mentioned left screen of Sansetsu's "Dragon and Tiger." (Figures 29-30.) Though Kanô Hiroyuki is most likely correct in claiming that the origin of Shôhaku's image was a hanging scroll by Zheng Dianxian 鄭顛仙 (16th cent.) now possessed by Kokushôji temple near Kyoto (Figure 31),[4] a simple comparison between the three works shows stronger similarities between the Japanese images. Shôhaku has adjusted the animal's head and tail, but otherwise his tiger strikes the same pose as Sansetsu's, with its front paws placed side-by-side, and its shoulder blades protruding. Common elements in their work that are not found in the Zheng painting are the tiger's dramatically arched back and the placement of its right rear leg, raised and barely visible behind the opposing one.[5]

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[2] To my knowledge, this connection between Shôhaku's and Sansetsu's depictions of Xiwangmu has never been noted in the literature before.

[3] Kyoto National Museum, *Tokubetsu tenrankai: Soga Shôhaku – Shôhaku Show.* 『特別展覧会：曾我蕭白 – Shôhaku Show』. (Kyoto: Kyoto National Museum, 2005), 334.

[4] Ibid, 334.

[5] To my knowledge, this connection between Shôhaku's and Sansetsu's tigers has never been noted in the literature before.

Though paintings by Itô Jakuchû that emulate those of Matabei or Sansetsu have yet to be identified, Money Hickman has proposed that Jakuchû's "Rain Dragon" may have been partly inspired by "Ogress under Willow Tree," a work of his contemporary, Shôhaku (Figures 32-33). The two pictures may be entirely different in format, painting style, and subject matter, but Hickman notes important similarities in the open mouth, the curled tongue, the pug nose, and the heavenward gaze of both the ogress and dragon (Figures 34-35). "It seems likely that Jakuchû, recognizing the amusing quality of the ugly and strange characters first drawn by Shôhaku, wanted to add that element to his own pictures," ventures the author.[6]

As previously mentioned, Tsuji asserts that the late paintings of Nagasawa Rosetsu indicate that the artist had developed an interest in the grotesquerie of Soga Shôhaku.[7] Rosetsu's "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman" indeed shows strong similarities with certain portraits by Shôhaku, particularly that of the unidentified figure in "Immortals" who is surrounded by children (Figures 36-37). In Rosetsu's depiction, the young Kintarô, appealing Yamauba to embrace him, leans against her left leg, raises his left arm to grab hold of her belt, and raises his left leg in such a way that his thigh is perpendicular to his torso, his knee is cocked at an acute angle, and his foot points horizontally towards the woman's shin. In "Immortals," the unidentified figure is surrounded by several juvenile ogres, but the foremost one wearing a red tunic assumes

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[6] Hickman, Money L. and Yasuhiro Satô. *The Paintings of Jakuchû*. (New York: Asia Society Galleries in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 144.

[7] Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* 『奇想の系譜：又兵衛一国芳』 (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 117.

precisely the same pose. Rosetsu's painting style, on the other hand, seems to be more closely tied to works of Shôhaku such as Hanshan and Shide (Figure 38).

Despite the gap of two and a half centuries that exists between the two artists, several portraits of Matabei designed by Utagawa Kuniyoshi further testify to an interconnection between eccentric artists. Several explanations can be offered for Kuniyoshi's interest in his subject. Matabei was recognized as the originator of Ôtsu-e and perhaps of ukiyo-e in general. Furthermore, "Keisei Hangonkô" and other plays by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1725) that incorporated the character of "Stammering Matahei" had been performing in Edo over the previous fifty years. In "Keisei Hangonkô," which was written as a puppet performance in 1708 and adapted for Kabuki in 1719,[8] Matahei struggles in vain to gain public acceptance as an artist trained in the Tosa school. Overwhelmed by despair, he decides to commit suicide with his wife, and as a final memento, paints a self-portrait on a stone water basin (Figure 39). When the image magically appears on the opposite side of the basin as well, his teacher Mitsunobu realizes his artistic genius and bestows upon him the name of Tosa.[9] In keeping with the image of Matabei conveyed through performances such as this, Kuniyoshi's 1853 portrait focuses explicitly upon the abnormality of Matabei's work, as is evident in the title, "The Strange Pictures of Ukiyo Matabei" (*Ukiyo Matabei meiga kidoku*; Figure 40).

Among Kuniyoshi's works, ironically, can also be found a series based upon literature about eccentrics. The title of *Stories of Remarkable Persons of Loyalty and*

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[8] Torigoe Bunzô 鳥越文蔵, ed., *Kabuki Onstage* 『歌舞伎オン・ステージ』. Vol. 12. (Tokyo: Shiromizusha, 1989): 222.
[9] Ibid, 6-7.

High Reputation (*Chûkô meiyo kijin den*), which was produced around 1845, was derived from the biographies about eccentrics (*kijin-den*) written by Ban Kôkei and his followers. Kuniyoshi's series portrays a variety of warriors with bizarre abilities, including the elderly fencing master Tsukahara Bokuden (1489-1571), who the artist here depicts in an imaginary duel with the eminent swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (ca. 1584-1645). Evident here is the wit for which Kuniyoshi is so well remembered. Though weakened by advanced age, debilitated by osteoporosis, and armed with nothing more than wooden pot-lids, Bokuden is able to not only defend himself but seriously threaten the doubly armed Musashi without leaving his warm, comfortable seat next to the fire (Figure 41).

The Yipin Style and Eccentricity in Chinese Painting

In addition to perpetuating the belief that the aforementioned artists were oblivious to the existence of their eccentric contemporaries and predecessors, a great deal of the current literature on Japanese eccentric art ignores the way in which this genre mirrors and quite possibly originated from similar artistic traditions in China. One such tradition is the *yipin* style of painting that Tsuji mentions only incidentally during his discussion of Jakuchû's works at Kinkakuji temple.[10]

Shimada Shûjirô's 1950 essay "On I-p'in, the 'Extraordinary' Style of Chinese Painting" discusses the evolution of the system by which Chinese poetry, calligraphy and

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[10] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 73.

painting were qualitatively classified since the Six Dynasties (265-589 CE).[11] Works were critically divided into the three classes of divine, excellent, and competent and further subdivided into the three grades of upper, middle, and lower. By the mid-Tang (ca. 750 CE), this system was expanded with the addition of a fourth class; Li Sizhen 李嗣真 (fl. 689-696) had coined the term *yipin* 逸品 to refer to "untrammelled" works.[12] The meaning of the term itself underwent further modification by subsequent scholars; while Li Sizhen used yipin to refer to a superlative, innate talent, in his *The Famous Painters of the Tang Dynasty* (*Tang zhao ming hua lu*), the critic Zhu Jingxuan 朱景玄 (9th c.) uses the term quite differently, as Shimada describes:

> Yi *(untrammelled) refers to an expedient which releases one from orthodoxy, a permissible exception; it is an aberrant method not bound to the usual rules, a novelty. The establishment of the term in this meaning indicates a recognition that a non-conformist method of painting may exist in opposition to the orthodox methods, and that it cannot be excluded simply because it is thus unorthodox, but must be recognized to have its own special values. Therefore, the four classes, divine, excellent, competent, and untrammelled, were not arranged in order as degrees of a single, common matter; instead, the* yipin, *as a free and individual method of painting, was set in opposition to the three which adhered to the orthodox painting methods.*[13]

Since the Tang dynasty, the meaning of *yipin* has undergone radical transformation. As Susan E. Nelson explains in her essay "I-p'in in Later Painting Criticism," gestural

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[11] Shimada Shûjirô, "On I-p'in, the 'Extraordinary' Style of Chinese Painting," in *Oriental Art*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Summer 1961): 66. Translation by James Cahill.

[12] In his treatise on painting *Famous Painters of Yi Province* (*Yi zhou ming hua lu* 益州名画録) circa 1005, Huang Xiufu 黄休復 (late 10th c. – early 11th c.) attempted to revise the Four Classes system of grading, and in doing so, he proposed the label *yige* 逸格 (Japanese: *ikkaku*) in place of *yipin*. Since then, the two terms have been used more or less interchangeably. See Ibid, 72-3.

[13] Ibid, 67.

brushwork was highly praised in Tang art circles as a tangible signifier of *yipin*, yet perhaps due to the popularization of literati works in the late Yuan, the use of spontaneous brush strokes and "flying white" eventually came to be appropriated by professional artists as well.[14] As a result, by the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644), critics had discarded the formal meaning of *yipin* and reserved the term only for an extremely small number of truly exceptional painters whose styles shared little in common. The writings of Dong Qichang (1555 – 1636) in the early 17th century were highly influential in this process of selection:

> *[Ni Zan's] painting at the time of the last dynasty can be called of the untrammelled class…. Among Song men, [Mi Fu] was beyond the beaten path; the others all came out of a mold. There were many able Yuan men, but they carried on the dictates of the Song methods, merely adding a little solitary and relaxed feeling. [Wu Zhen] had an abundance of inspiration; [Huang Gongwang], an especially marvelous quality; [Wang Meng] mastered the former ways. But these three all had a conventional, practiced air to their brushwork. [Ni Zan] alone was old-fashioned, unassertive, and natural. He was the only one after Mad Mi.*[15]

Considering their painting methods, Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107) and Ni Zan 倪瓚 (1301-1374) indeed form an unlikely pair. "Mountains and Pines in Spring" (Figure 42), displaying the wet, overlapping dots that became Mi Fu's hallmark motif, communicates to the viewer a vastly different sensibility than the parched, delicately painted landscape of "The Rongxi Studio" (Figure 43). What Dong Qichang seems to appreciate about these artists, however, is the radical unconventionality of their respective styles, a quality that various critics, like Dong, described it in psychoanalytic terms. Ni Zan's

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[14] Nelson, Susan E., "I-p'in in Later Painting Criticism." In Bush, Susan and Christian Murck, *Theories of the Arts in China* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 339.
[15] Ibid, 339.

contemporary Yuan Hua (1316 – after 1376), for example, inscribed one of Ni's paintings with the phrase, "Ni Yu is like Mad Mi," elaborating in the following way:

> *... [Mi Fu] had a passion for cleanliness, and all his paintings and calligraphy were scrolls of small size; in recent times, [Ni Zan] is the only one who closely resembles him. Mi called himself mad [dian 顛] so I will call Ni eccentric [yu 迂]. Today, looking at his surviving paintings, they all equal [Mi].*[16]

The term *yiren* (逸人; Japanese: *itsujin*), meaning an "untrammelled person," someone unencumbered by social conventions, seems to have originated from this time period. The mind of the artist, rather than the brush, came to be the object to which *yi* referred. The term was known to have appeared in Chinese literature soon thereafter, in the 1455 publication *Zhuju qingshi* 『竹居清事』.[17]

The profound influence that both the earlier and later manifestations of *yipin* painting had upon Japanese art in the Edo period should not be overlooked. In *Rustic Talks on Painting* (*Kaiji higen*), published in 1799, Kuwayama Gyokushû (1746-99), an advocate of Japanese literati painting, discusses the concept of "*yipin*" at length (though, according to Melinda Takeuchi, he seems not to recognize the evolution of the term, confuses the two meanings).[18] Gyokushû claims that the secrets of the untrammelled style had been passed down through several generations of Chinese artists and that Yi Fujiu (1698- after 1747), a Chinese literatus who resided intermittently in Japan from

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[16] Ibid, 402.
[17] *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*, volume 1, 1167.
[18] Takeuchi, Melinda. "'True' Views: Taiga's *Shinkeizu* and the Evolution of Literati Painting Theory in Japan." In *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 48, no. 1 (February 1989): 4.

1720-47, ultimately transmitted the knowledge to Ike no Taiga. Melinda Takeuchi expresses serious doubt about Gyokushû's statements, but she admits that Ike no Taiga was undoubtedly well familiar with *yipin* and even used the seal "lofty untrammelledness" (*kôitsu* 高逸) on paintings such as "On the Way to a Friend's House" 崖樹訪友図.[19] (Figures 44-45.) Moreover, she states, Gyokushû's essay lent itself perfectly to the public fascination about eccentric and unusual people, a topic that deeply permeated the culture of eighteenth-century Japan.[20] If the concept of *yipin* indeed appeared and gained popularity within Japan by the late eighteenth century, then such knowledge, particularly tales about "Mad Mi and Eccentric Ni," may very well have inspired Ban Kôkei's *Kinsei kijin-den*. Among the many similar biographies that appeared soon thereafter and rode on the coattails of Kôkei's success was the 1824 text *Kinsei Itsujin Gashi* 『近世逸人画史』 (*A History of Paintings by Eccentric Persons of Recent Times*), featuring Itô Jakuchû and Soga Shôhaku.[21]

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[19] While Hoan Kosugi, Ichimatsu Tanaka, and Rankei Yamanaka, the scholars who authenticated the artworks presented in *Ike no Taiga Gafu*, note that this painting was made when the artist was in his early thirties, Takeuchi describes it as being from his early twenties. According to the former, more conservative estimate, the term *yipin* was known in Japan by 1758, thirty years before Ban Kôkei wrote *Kinsei kijin-den*. Ike no Taiga Gafu 池大雅画風. (Tokyo: Chûô Kôron Bijutsu Shuppan, 1957), vol. 1. (5 volumes.) See also Takeuchi, Melinda, *Taiga's True Views: the Language of Landscape Painting in Eighteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 161.

[20] Takeuchi, "'True' Views: Taiga's *Shinkeizu* and the Evolution of Literati Painting Theory in Japan," 4-7.

[21] Kobayashi Tadashi 小林忠, Kôno Motoaki 河野元昭, ed.. "Kinsei Itsujin Gashi." 「近世逸人画史」. *Teihon Nihon kaigaron taisei* 『定本日本絵画論大成』. Tokyo: Perikansha, 1996. Vol. 10. As discussed in Rosenfield, John M. and Fumiko E. Cranston. *Extraordinary persons: Works by Eccentric, Nonconformist Japanese Artists of the Early Modern Era (1580-1868) in the Collection of Kimiko and John Powers*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Art Museums, 1999), 31.

References to Chinese Eccentric Art in Itô Jakuchû's Bird Paintings

The Great Tenmei Fire that destroyed the central area of Kyoto in 1788 radically changed Itô Jakuchû's living conditions as well as his artistic style. The three studios in which the artist worked and resided were all destroyed, and perhaps due to injuries sustained in the fire, Jakuchû contracted a serious illness the following year. Although he had been comfortably supported by his family's greengrocery throughout most of his life, the artist suddenly seemed to become desperate for money. He began selling quickly produced, improvisational ink paintings for one *to* (approximately 18 liters) of rice, and the artist names Tobeian ("one-*to*-of-rice hermitage") and Beito-ô ("one-*to*-of-rice old man") that Jakuchû assumed around this time reflected this new custom. While the artist's work for the remaining twelve years of his life are commonly appreciated in light of this immense tragedy, several stylistic and iconographic similarities between these late paintings and those by the Qing dynasty painter Bada Shanren (八大山人, ca. 1625-ca. 1705) indicate that Jakuchû may well have developed a strong interest and understanding of Chinese eccentric art around this time.

The belief in a connection between these two artists is not without precedent. Tsuji Nobuo has noticed a similarity between Jakuchû's late, monochromatic works and the paintings of Bada.[22] Money Hickman has expressed doubt in Tsuji's assertion,[23] but almost in the same breath, he states that:

> *The depiction in monochrome ink of various sorts of natural subjects... has a venerable history in China. Such depictions may be seen in the*

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[22] Tsuji Nobuo. *Jakuchû* 『若沖』. (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1974), 195.
[23] Ibid, 161.

> *work of... such Ming and Ch'ing artists as... Pa-ta Shan-jen (also known as Chu Ta)...*[24]

Little biographical information about the Chinese artist is known except for the report that, at a certain point in his life, he seemed to be overcome by a severe mental disturbance. From this time onward, he was overwhelmed by violent mood swings, and eventually he stopped speaking entirely, communicating with others only through gesticulations, writing, and his artwork.[25] Various comments by his contemporaries emphasize the artist's troubled behavior,[26] and today "the madness of Bada Shanren's paintings" is a dominant theme of any art historical discussion about him.[27] As additional information about the artist has surfaced in recent years, however, scholars now favor a new interpretation: Bada, as a descendant of the Ming imperial family, assumed a posture of insanity in order to escape persecution during the politically tumultuous Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The artist originally took sanctuary in the Buddhist priesthood and took the tonsure around 1645, the year in which Manchu forces conquered Nanching. Thirty-three years later, however, the Qing government revived the *boxue hongci* examination system to recruit accomplished scholars such as Bada for government positions. Scholars now acknowledge the likelihood that the artist's "madness," which began at precisely this time,

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[24] Ibid, 134.
[25] Cahill, James. *Treasures of Asia: Chinese Painting* (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company, 1960), 174-5.
[26] Ibid, 175. "'When he felt inclined to write,' recounts one of his contemporaries who composed a brief biography of him, 'he would bare his arm and grasp the brush, at the same time emitting loud cries like a madman.' ... The same biographer, writing without the benefit of modern psychology, expresses bewilderment that works of such power could be accomplished under these conditions. 'Alas and alas,' he exclaims, 'one can get drunk as he did, but not crazy as he was!'"
[27] Cahill, James. "The 'Madness' in Bada Shanren's Paintings.' In *Ajia Bunka Kenkyu* (March 1989) 17: 119-43.

was a strategy by which Bada could avoid the examination and preserve his loyalty to the Ming government.[28] In his article, "The Toleration of Eccentrics," Nelson I. Wu explains how feigned insanity was used in the 17th century as a effective escape from political oppression:

> *It is characteristic and important that an eccentric [could] renounce the ordinary status he once had... by being mildly odd in everyday behavior and thus escaping the petty criticisms of not living up to obligations, or by going completely insane and thus renouncing all social privileges and escaping into another world free of responsibilities.*[29]

Though neither erratic personal behavior nor political defiance are evident in accounts of Jakuchû's life, nevertheless his paintings show striking thematic and formal similarities to this Chinese predecessor. Bada Shanren's paintings are filled with images of animals, mostly birds, which are isolated against a plain background and occasionally surrounded by gestural indications of trees or rocks (Figures 46-47). In a comment which brings to mind the chickens from Jakuchû's third stylistic phase, James Cahill muses:

> *Are the misshapen birds that inhabit so many of his pictures, usually balancing unsteadily on one leg, symbols that had for the painter some definite meaning, or was this simply a private joke of which he never tired? Some of his birds and other creatures have square or lozenge-shaped eyes, the significance of which, if any, is equally unfathomable. He seems to endow them, at times, with human attributes: a crow, or a fish, will glower malevolently from the picture, and small fluffy birds... display more self-satisfaction than one would expect to encounter in the animal kingdom.*[30]

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[28] Wang Fangyu and Richard M. Barnhart. *Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren, 1626-1705*. Judith G. Smith, ed. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Art Gallery: Yale University Press, 1990., 13-14.
[29] Wu, Nelson I.. "The Toleration of Eccentrics." In *Art News* 56 (May 1957) 3: 27.
[30] Cahill, James. *Treasures of Asia: Chinese Painting*, 175.

The most prevalent emotion that Bada's animals depict, however, is apprehension. With the same binocular vision which many of Jakuchû's birds possess, they glance upwards, as if preparing to dodge some object above them which they expect might suddenly come crashing down. In a detail of the "Anwan Album," 1694 (Figure 47), the shape and posture of the bird on the right begs a comparison with Jakuchû's "Hen and Rooster with Grapevine" (Figure 48-49). The contour of both birds are almost perfectly circular and, standing on one leg, they are both shown focusing their eyes on the upper left corner of the composition. Though depicting different species of birds, a section of Bada's "Duck" (Figure 50) seems to be almost a mirror image of Jakuchû's "Rooster, Hen, and Horsefly" (Figure 51) for the same reasons. Moreover, both paintings blend easily identifiable imagery – namely, the birds – with slightly abstract objects in their environment. The amorphous line arcing above the duck's tail describes a boulder, while a similar line above the chicken's tail represents its mate.

Information about the provenance of Bada Shanren's paintings suggests the strong likelihood that Jakuchû knew of and had personally seen the Chinese artist's work. Along with Wen Cheng's "Cranes," the Shôkokuji monastery collection contains a dramatic landscape painting by Bada (Figure 52).[31] Considering the direction in which Jakuchû's artwork eventually headed, if he had seen this scroll at the time he copied

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[31] Suzuki Kei. *Comprehensive Illustrated Catalog of Chinese Paintings* 5. (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1983), 327, 349. Another version of the Shōkokuji scroll (labeled JT3-014 in Suzuki) is in the collection of Jishôin, a subtemple of Shôkokuji (JT118-019 in Suzuki). Although Wang has assumed that both scrolls were painted by Bada (see Wang, 214), the accuracy with which the brushstrokes in the earlier work, whichever that may be, were copied suggests the hand of a skillful admirer rather than the original artist. Bada occasionally repeated motifs, such as a particularly successful figure but he was not known to reproduce works with such meticulous precision as is found in this duplication. The provenance of these two works requires further investigation.

Cheng's works, he most likely would have been impressed by them for the reasons which Cahill outlines:

> *The hanging scroll... [has] an air of improvisation. Evidences of change of plan are visible here and there, and ambiguous passages which are likely to have been only partially intentional.... The twisting, rising progression of rocks and ridges cannot be understood logically at every point.... Yet the landscape has the organic unity of a natural growth....*[32]

Even though Jakuchû himself adopted a distinctly different style – his figures are characterized by geometric division more than organic unity – he certainly held the belief that an image need not necessarily conform to the logical order of visible nature.

If, as deduced earlier, Jakuchû had seen the works in the Shôkokuji collection sometime in the late 1750s or early 1760s, then his introduction to the works of Bada at that time would explain why his paintings of chickens and cranes from this time begin to employ the same poses, emotional tone, and human-like eyes. However, since the Shōkokuji landscape has none of this imagery itself, Jakuchû would have to had seen other works by Bada Shanren, such as the "Anwan Album" itself. This opportunity may have indeed existed: the album has for years been included in the Sumitomo collection of the Sen'oku Hakko-kan museum in Kyoto. As with the hanging scroll in the Shōkokuji collection, further research on the provenance of this work is currently being undertaken in order to determine whether more definite links can be established. The present evidence, nonetheless, is intriguing and encouraging.

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[32] Ibid, 175.

References to Chinese Eccentric Art in Soga Shôhaku's "Immortals"

As with Jakuchû's bird paintings, a visual analysis of the 1764 "Immortals" screens by Soga Shôhaku (Figures 53-54) indicates the artist's awareness of Chinese eccentric art. In his discussion of the screen, Tsuji Nobuo mentions that other scholars notice within it strong similarities to *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall* (晚笑堂画傳 *Wanxiao tang huazhuan*), an album of woodblock prints designed by Shangguan Zhou 上官周 (1665-1750) and published in 1743. The author retorts:

> *From the fact that* Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall ... *closely resembles this screen in terms of the artist's style and the figures' clothing, it is possible that Shôhaku saw and used as a source an illustration book of similar origin that was imported to Japan around that time. However, one could not go to the extreme of saying that "Immortals" was a faithful copy of this source.*[33]

In his attempt to defend Shôhaku's individuality by dismissing the idea that the painter appropriated imagery from other sources, Tsuji inadvertently brushes aside significant information about Shôhaku's art historical awareness. A visual comparison between figures in the "Immortals" screen and those in Shangguan's *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall* suggests that Shôhaku was knowledgeable about the Chinese eccentric artists with whom Shangguan was associated, thereby throwing into question the "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity" theory through which Shôhaku's work has been interpreted.

In the right screen of Shôhaku's work, the figure of Lu Dongbin (Japanese: Ryodôhin; Figure 55), perches dramatically upon the head an enormous flying dragon,

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[33] Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 81.

and his cerulean blue robe billows in the wind. To indicate the ferocity of the wind, Shôhaku depicts the robe flaring away from Lu's forearms and calves and curling into tight spirals like wisps of smoke. A series of undulating lines ripple throughout the interior of his robe, completely obscuring the figure's physique. Shangguan's depiction of Gu Kaizhi (顧愷之, also known as Gu Hutou 顧虎頭, 344 405 CE) utilizes the same organic line-work to emphasize the graceful, flowing garments of the Six Dynasties painter.[34] (Figure 56.) Shangguan most likely portrayed the painter's clothing in this way as a subtle reference to the ethereal costumes found in Gu's own works, such as "Admonitions of the Instructress to the Ladies of the Palace" (Figure 57).

In Shôhaku's screen, Lu Dongbin and his dragon are greeted by Li Tieguai (Japanese: Tekkai), on whose back hangs a large hat (Figure 58). On the brim of the hat as well as on the top of the crown, the woven bamboo forms lines that radiate out in a sunburst pattern, and parallel lines similarly run up the sides of the crown. What appears to be the prototype for Tieguai's hat can be found in Shangguan's illustration of Tieguan Daoren 鐵冠道人(b. 1294, fl. 1367), also known as Zhongzhang 張中, a Daoist hermit who was said to have resided in Linchuan City in north-central Jiangxi Province.[35] (Figure 59.) The only noticeable differences between the two hats are that Zhongzhang's has a slightly more shallow crown, is tilted at a more vertical angle, and seems to be decorated with a flower or a *lingzhi* mushroom.

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[34] Xie He (fl. 6th cent.) refers to Gu Kaizhi 顧愷之 as Gu Hutou 顧虎頭 in the third chapter of *Records of Ancient Paintings* (*Gu huapin lu* 『古畫品錄』), as recorded in Chen Chuanxi 陈传席编. *Liu chao hua jia shi liao* 『六朝画家史料』 (Beijing: Wen wu chu ban she: Xin hua shu dian jing xiao, 1990), 120.

[35] Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 et al., ed. *Ming shi* 明史. Volume 9. (Shanghai: Han yu da ci dian chu ban she, 2004), 2105.

In Shôhaku's portrait of Liu Haichan (Japanese: Gama), the immortal's head seems to have originated from Shangguan's image of Zhou Dian 周顛 (late 14th - early 15th century), an insane monk who possessed various supernatural powers and who was therefore eventually employed as the Ming emperor's military advisor.[36] (Figures 60-61.) Shangguan expresses Zhou's mental instability through physical features such as his spherical head and his flame-shaped eyes. Liu Haichan's head in Shôhaku's painting is an almost perfect mirror-image of Zhou Dian's: though their mouths, chins and hairstyles are quite different, the similar shapes of their heads, eyes, noses and ears are undeniable. (Figures 62-63.)

The inspiration for Shôhaku's image of Xiwangmu (Japanese: Seiôbo), the Mother Goddess of the West, appears to be Shangguan's portrait of the Western Han poetess Ban Jieyu (班婕妤; active 1st century BCE, Figures 64-65). Their hair is tied up in elaborate buns decorated with fancifully shaped pins that evoke the image of spring flowers. Their faces, turned slightly to the viewer's right, both display high foreheads, noses simply indicated by one or two lines, mouths no wider than their noses, and a few ripples of flesh beneath their chins (Figures 66-67). The immortal obscures her face behind an *uchiwa* with an ornate frame and translucent silk, and Ban holds a much simpler fan at the level of her waist. Though the most distinctive attributes that they share, the fans of these women convey ironically different meanings. While Xiwangmu's is a decoration with which she frames her face and coquettishly poses, Ban's is a

[36] Ibid, vol. 9, 6104-5.

reference to her poem about the way her former lover, the emperor Chengdi (31-6 BCE), betrayed her for a younger, more physically attractive rival:

Newly cut fine white silk,
Clear and pure as frost and snow.
Made into a fan for joyous trysts,
Round as the bright moon.
In and out of my lord's cherished sleeve,
Waved back and forth to make a light breeze.
Often I fear the arrival of the autumn season,
Cool winds overcoming the summer heat.
Discarded into a box,
Affection cut off before fulfillment.[37]

Shôhaku's appropriation of imagery by Shangguan Zhou raises compelling questions about the extent to which the Japanese painter knew about Shangguan's student Huang Shen (黃慎, 1687-1772), an artist who shares many similarities with Shôhaku.[38] In early works such as "The Eight Immortals" (Figure 68), Huang employed the *gongbi* 工筆 style and delineated the contours of his subject with unmodulated, iron-wire line-work. Displaying far more stylistic versatility than Shangguan, however, Huang later abandoned this meticulous painting method and embraced a radically different, gestural mode reminiscent of untrammelled Tang works. Describing these late paintings such as "Landscape with Scholar and Servant" (Figure 69), one of Huang's contemporaries wrote, "his painting was like a rough draft, with only a very few strokes and forms difficult to distinguish, but when viewed from a distance of ten feet or so, then the essential spirit

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[37] Watson, Burton. *The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry: From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century.* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1984), 75-8.
[38] Huang Shen's apprenticeship under Shangguan is discussed in *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Individualists and Eccentrics: The Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Finlayson Collection of Chinese Paintings.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 59.

and inner strength appeared."[39] Such a description could be easily applied to works such as "Hanshan and Shide" (Figure 38) that Shôhaku painted in the spontaneous mode. Shôhaku is not known to have ever directly appropriated imagery by Huang Shen, but considering the close stylistic similarities between Shôhaku and Huang, as well as the fact that Huang's fame in China far surpassed that of his teacher, it seems very likely that Shôhaku knew of him.

While in his thirties, Huang departed his home in Nanghua, Fujian Province and traveled throughout the southern provinces until he arrived in Yangzhou in 1723. There, he found the atmosphere there receptive for painting and so decided to stay for the next eight years.[40] Along with Li Shan (李鱓, 1686-ca. 1760), Wang Shishen (汪士慎, 1686-1759), Jin Nong (金農, 1687-1763), Gao Xiang (高翔, 1688-1753), Zheng Xie (鄭燮, 1693-1765), Li Fangying (李方膺, 1695-1754), and Luo Ping (羅聘, 1733-1799), Huang Shen eventually developed a reputation as one of the so-called Eight Eccentrics of Yangzhou (揚州八怪, Ch: *Yangzhou baguai*).[41]

In light of the evidence that Soga Shôhaku, Itô Jakuchû, Nagasawa Rosetsu and Utagawa Kuniyoshi have all imitated the works of other Japanese eccentrics and that Jakuchû and Shôhaku were furthermore inspired by the work of Chinese eccentric artists,

[39] Ibid, 52.
[40] Ibid, 59.
[41] A particularly informative study in English on this group is Giacalone, Vito. *The Eccentric Painters of Yangzhou*. New York City: China House Gallery, China Institute in America, 1990. Although only eight members are traditionally recognized in the group, Giacolone lists discusses other Yangzhou eccentrics as well, including Fang Shishu 方士庶 (1692-1751), Gao Fenghan 高鳳翰 (1683-1748), Hua Yan 華嵒 (1682-1756), Min Zhen 閔貞 (1730 – ca. 1788), and Shitao 石濤 (1642 – 1707). Ibid, 85.

the pervasive concept of "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity" seriously hinders scholars who hope to further explore the genre of Japanese eccentric art. In searching for an alternative definition of eccentricity, the earliest known Japanese references to *kijin* need to be re-examined with particular attention paid to how they relate to Chinese concepts of eccentricity. Chapter Three focuses upon Ban Kôkei's and Mikuma Katen's *Kinsei kijin-den* and reveals its theoretical basis in ancient teachings of religious and philosophical Daoism.

Figure 23. Iwasa Matabei, "Hitomaro Eigu," late 16th – early 17th century, ink on paper, 94.3 x 35.9 cm, Atami Museum of Art.

Figure 24. Soga Shôhaku, "Poet Kakinomoto Hitomaro," ca. 1767, ink on paper, 125.5 x 56.2 cm, Manpukuji Temple, Hyogo Prefecture.

Figure 25. Kanô Sansetsu, "Xiwangmu (Seiôbô), the Queen Mother of the West and Mu Wang (Bokuo) Screen," detail: Xiwangmu and attendants; early 17th century, one of a pair of 6-fold screens, ink on paper, 152.5 x 350.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 26. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: attendant of Xiwangmu; 1764, color and ink on paper, 172.0 x 378.0 cm each, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Tokyo.

Figure 27. Iwasa Matabei, "Tiger," detail: face of tiger; late 16th – early 17th century, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 133.0 x 54.0 cm, Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 28. Soga Shôhaku, "Lion Dog and Tiger," detail: face of lion dog; 18th century, ink on paper, pair of 2-fold screens, 154.3 x 156.6 cm, Chiba City Museum of Art.

Figure 29. Kanô Sansetsu, "Dragon and Tiger," detail: tiger; ink and color on paper, Yoshimura collection.

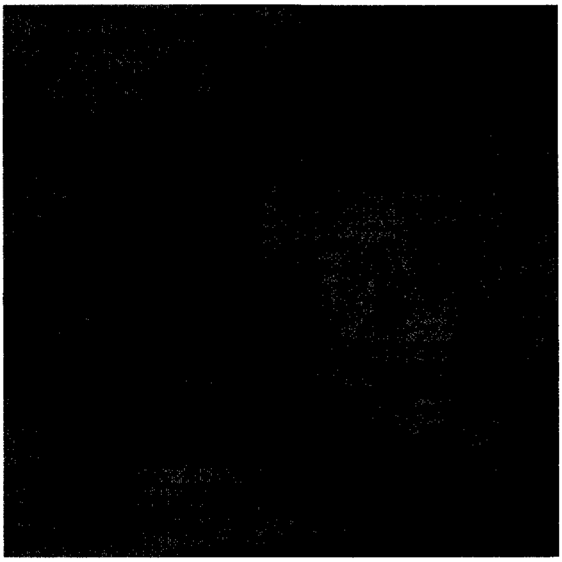

Figure 30. Soga Shôhaku, "Lion Dog and Tiger," detail: tiger; 18th century, ink on paper, pair of 2-fold screens, 154.3 x 156.6 cm, Chiba City Museum of Art.

Figure 31. Zheng Dianxian, "Tiger and Dragon," detail: left scroll, pair of hanging scrolls, 16th century, ink on paper, 179.2 × 105.9 cm,; Kokushôji temple, Miyazu City, Japan.

Figure 32. Soga Shôhaku, "Ogress under Willow Tree," detail: ogress; ca. 1759, ink and light color on paper, 2-fold screen, 154.0 x 152.6 cm, Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music University Art Museum.

Figure 33. Itô Jakuchû, "Rain Dragon," early 1760s, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 130.5 x 53 cm, private collection, Akita Prefecture.

Figure 34. Soga Shôhaku, detail of Figure 32.

Figure 35. Itô Jakuchû, detail of Figure 33.

Figure 36. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: unidentified figure; 1764, color and ink on paper, 172.0 x 378.0 cm each, Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Figure 37. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman," 1797, ink and color on paper, 150 x 83 cm, Itsukushima Shrine Museum, Hiroshima Prefecture.

Figure 38. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: right scroll (Shide); ca. 1761-2, ink on paper, 197.0 x 115.0 cm each, Kôshôji temple.

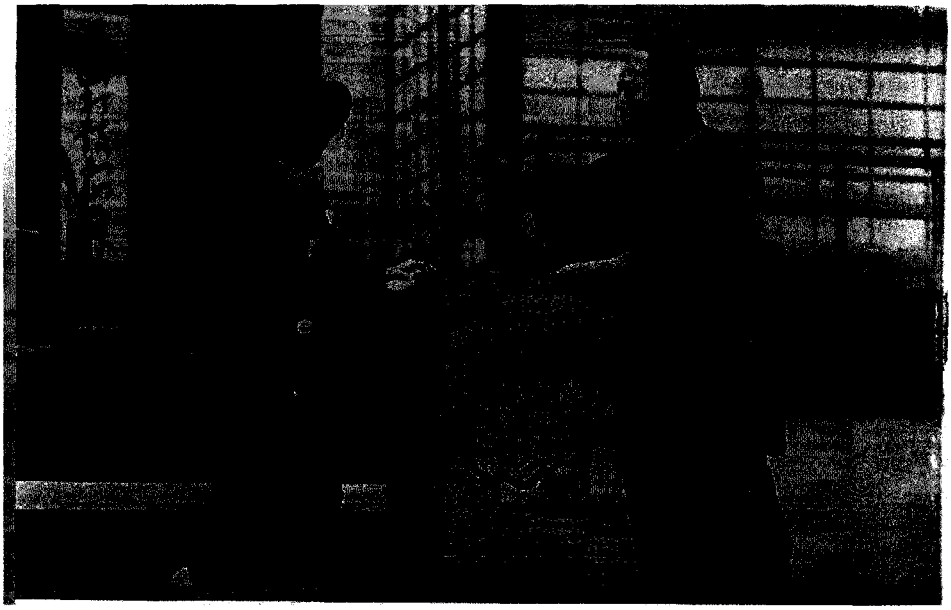

Figure 39. Matahei and his wife Otoku beside a stone basin displaying his self-portrait in a February 1956 production of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's "Keisei Hangonkô" at the Kabukiza. Right: Ichikawa En'ô (1888-1963) as Matabei; left: Nakamura Tokizô III (d. 1959) as Otoku. Photograph from *Chikamatsu Meisakushû.*

Figure 40. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "The Strange Pictures of Ukiyo Matabei" (*Ukiyo Matabei meiga kidoku*), 1853, ink and color on paper, ôban diptych (37 x 50 cm), Merlin C. Dailey collection.

Figure 41. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Miyamoto Musashi and the old master Tsukahara Bokuden," from the series *Stories of Remarkable Persons of Loyalty and High Reputation* (*Chûkô meiyo kijin den*), ca. 1845, ink and color on paper, ôban (37.8 x 25.8 cm), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 42. Attributed to Mi Fu, "Mountains and Pines in Spring," ca. 1050, hanging scroll, ink and slight color on paper, 62.5 x 44 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan.

Figure 43. Ni Zan, "The Rongxi Studio," 1372, hanging scroll, ink on paper, H: 74.6 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan.

Figure 44. Ike no Taiga, "On the Way to a Friend's House," circa 1753-1758, ink and slight color on paper, 126.2 x 27 cm. Collection of Mr. Yoshine Iida, Tokyo.

Figure 45. Detail, Taiga's seal: "Lofty untrammelledness" (Kôitsu).

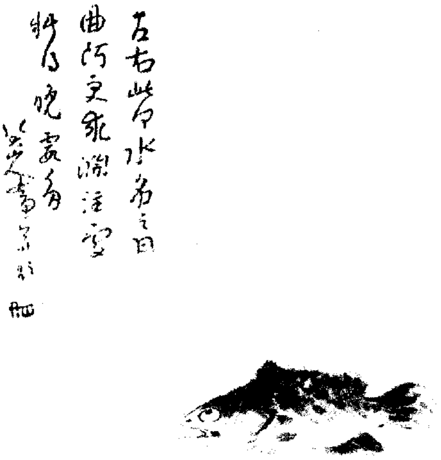

Figure 46. Bada Shanren, "Anwan Album," detail. Album of 22 leaves, ink on paper, 1694, Sumitomo Collection, Sen-oku Hakko kan, Kyoto.

Figure 47. Bada Shanren, "Anwan Album," detail.

Figure 48. Itô Jakuchû, "Hen and Rooster with Grapevine," 1792, hanging scroll, color on silk, 102.0 x 41.5 cm.

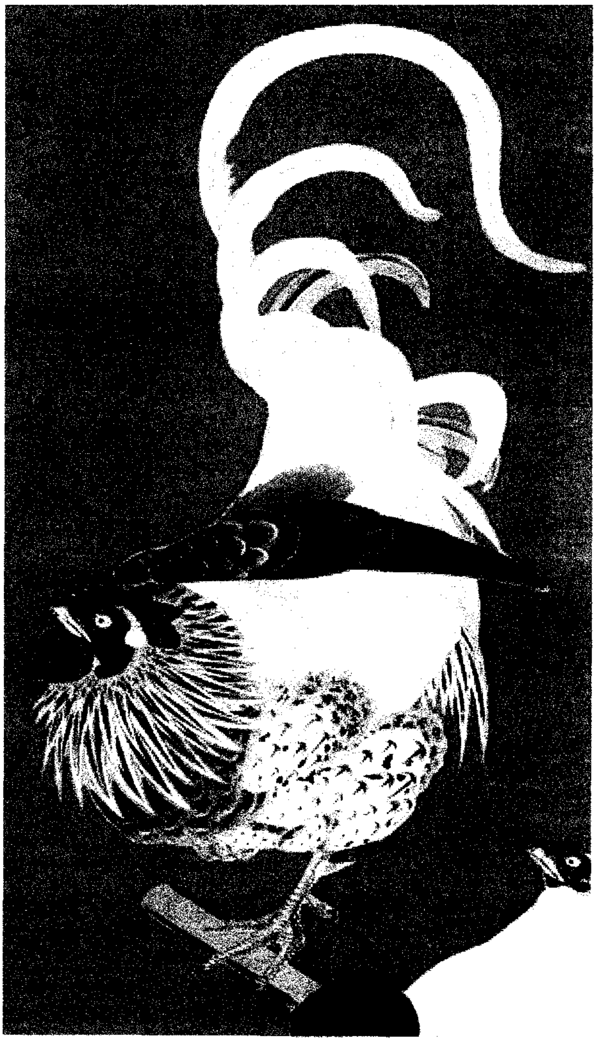

Figure 49. Itô Jakuchû, "Hen and Rooster with Grapevine," detail.

Figure 50. Bada Shanren, "Duck," undated, ink on paper.

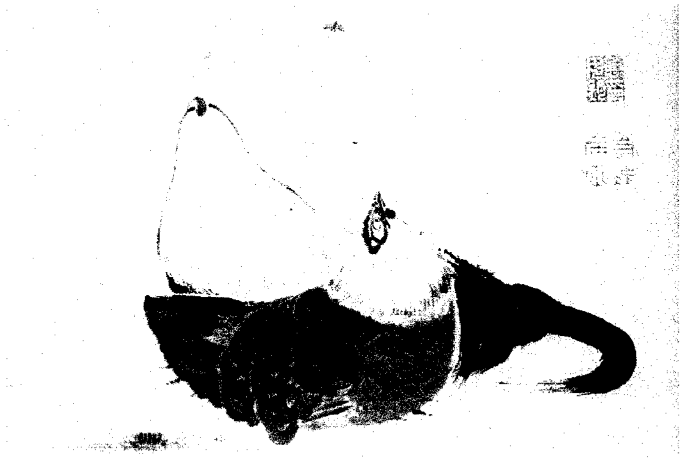

Figure 51. Itô Jakuchû, "Rooster, Hen, and Horsefly," undated, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 36.9 x 52.6 cm, Hosomi Art Foundation.

Figure 52. Bada Shanren, "Landscape with Sparse Trees and Barren Mountains," ca. 1703-05, ink and light color on paper, hanging scroll, 62 ¼" x 18 3/8". Shôkokuji Jotenkaku Museum, Kyoto.

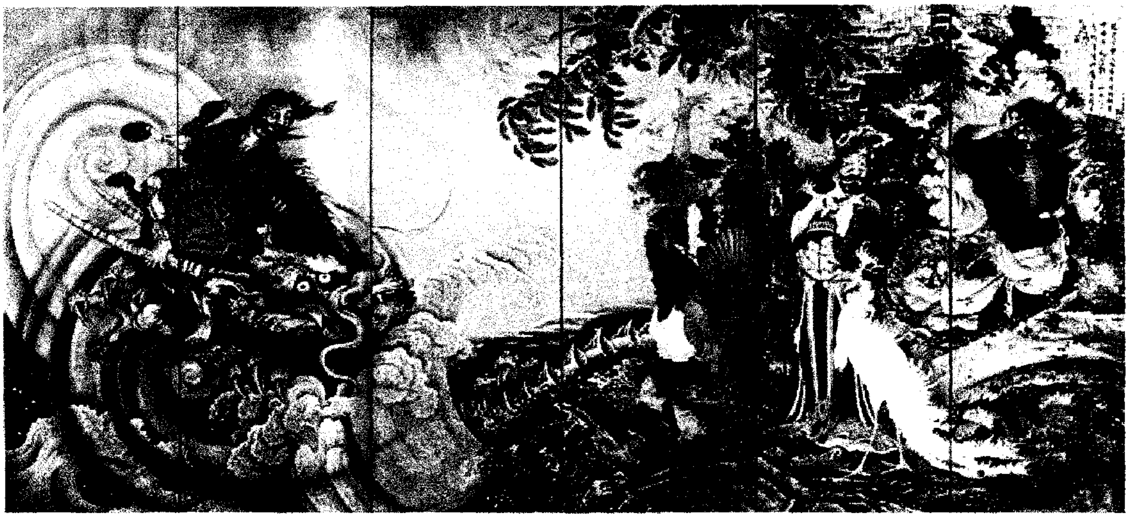

Figure 53. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: right screen; 1764, color and ink on paper, 172.0 x 378.0 cm each, Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Figure 54. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: left screen; 1764, color and ink on paper, 172.0 x 378.0 cm each, Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

Figure 55. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," right screen, detail: Lu Dongbin (Japanese: Ryodôhin)

Figure 56. Shangguan Zhou, *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall*, detail: page 113, illustration of Gu Kaizhi.

Figure 57. Attributed to Gu Kaizhi, "Admonitions of the Instructress to the Ladies of the Palace," detail. Late 4th century, early 5th century CE, handscroll, ink and color on silk. H: 24.8 cm. British Museum, London, England.

Figure 58. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," right screen, detail: Li Tieguai (Japanese: Tekkai Sennin)

Figure 59. Shangguan Zhou, *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall*, page 175, illustration of Zhongzhang.

Figure 60. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Liu Haichan (Japanese: Gama Sennin)

Figure 61. Shangguan Zhou, *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall*, page 197, illustration of Zhou Dian.

Figure 62. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Liu's head.

Figure 63. Shangguan Zhou, *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall*, detail: Zhou Dian's head.

Figure 64. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Xiwangmu (Japanese: Seiôbo), Mother Goddess of the West.

Figure 65. Shangguan Zhou, *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall*, page 19, illustration of Ban Jieyu.

Figure 66. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Xiwangmu's head.

Figure 67. Shangguan Zhou, *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall*, detail: Ban Jieyu's head.

Figure 68. Huang Shen, "The Eight Immortals," 18th century, 228.5 x 164 cm, Taizhou City Museum of Art, Taizhou City, Jiangsu Province, China.

Figure 69. Huang Shen, "Landscape with Scholar and Servant," 18th century, hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 42 x 54 ¾ in., Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, California.

Chapter Three: Textual Evidence of Daoist Influence upon the Japanese Definition of Eccentricity

Among the least understood facets of the eccentricity genre in both China and Japan has been its religious underpinnings, particularly its connection to Daoism. The complex meaning of the term Daoism has been a barrier in itself, and while a thorough discussion of the topic lies beyond the scope of this thesis, a few crucial facets demand attention. While philosophical Daoism (Ch: *daojia* 道家; Jpn: *dôka*), based largely upon the *Daode Jing* of Laozi (570-490 B.C.E.) and the writings of Zhuangzi (fl. ca. 350-300 B.C.E.), has received considerable attention outside of Asia, religious Daoism (Ch: *daojiao* 道教; Jpn: *dôkyô*) and its dominant concept of immortalism (Jpn: *shinsen shisô* 神仙思想) remain relatively obscure. Popularized and integrated into religious Daoism during the Warring States period (481-221 B.C.E.), immortalism maintains that an individual can attain eternal youth through the consumption of various divine substances as well as through self-isolation (eremitism) in the forests or mountains.[1] A pantheon of legendary immortals personifying this concept came to be worshipped, and though Daoism in Japan

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[1] Shimode Sekiyo 下出積与. *Shinsen shisô* 『神仙思想』. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1968), 1-4.

never developed into an institutionalized religion,[2] historians agree that it profoundly influenced the doctrine of Chan/Zen Buddhism.[3] Daoist thought rose to particularly popularity during the Edo period,[4] as can be detected in Ban Kôkei's *Kinsei kijin-den*. Within that literary work, references to *Zhuangzi*, the themes of eremitism and immortality, and stylistic similarities to the Ming work *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* reveal a Daoist influence upon the Japanese definition of eccentricity.

The clearest evidence that the subject of eccentricity in Japan is imbued with Daoist meaning is the fact that Ban Kôkei appropriated the term *kijin* (eccentric person) from *Zhuangzi*, one of the primary texts of philosophical Daoism. In "The Great and Venerable Teacher," the sixth chapter of *Zhuangzi*, Confucius and his disciples attend a funeral and notice that two guests are improperly dressed, playing music and singing aloud. When Confucius' followers, shocked and puzzled by such a blatant disregard for etiquette, ask the sage for an explanation, he states:

> *The singular man* (畸人, Ch: *ji ren*; Jpn: *kijin*) *is singular in comparison to other men but a companion of Heaven. So it is said, the*

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[2] Although Kuroita Katsumi 黒板勝美 (1874-1946) proposed that Futatsuki Palace in Nara Prefecture was described in the Nihon Shoki as a Daoist temple, Shimode Sekiyo has shown this to be incorrect and has offered strong evidence that, due to widely held suspicion about it, religious Daoism has never had an opportunity to develop into a public organization in Japan. Ibid, 4-17.

[3] Addiss, Stephen and Kwan S. Wong. *Obaku: Zen Painting and Calligraphy*. (Lawrence, Kansas: Helen Foresman Spencer Museum of Art, 1978), 9. Also: Clunas, Craig. *Art in China*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 101-2. Specific examples of how Daoism influenced the development of images that later came to be thought of as embodying Chan/Zen Buddhist concepts will be discussed in Chapter Four.

[4] Itô Jakuchû 伊藤若冲. *Jakuchû: tokubetsu tenrankai botsugo 200-nen: bunkazai hogohô 50-nen kinen jigyô=Jakuchû!* 『若冲：特別展覧会没後 200 年：文化財保護法 50 年記念事業= Jakuchû!』 (Kyoto: Kyoto kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2000), 11; and Melinda Takeuchi. *Taiga's True Views: The Language of Landscape Painting in Eighteenth-Century Japan*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1992), 122.

> *petty man of Heaven is a gentleman among men; the gentleman among men is the petty man of Heaven.*[5]

Though he admits that conventional morality is an expedient means to maintain social harmony, Zhuangzi, through the voice of Confucius, condemns it as unnatural and lauds eccentrics as "companions of Heaven" for having transcended it. Ironically, when Ban Kôkei wrote *Kinsei kijin-den*, this strict interpretation of eccentricity led a peer who had seen the manuscript and who was familiar with Daoism to criticize Kôkei for improper usage of the term *kijin*. Characters such as Nakae Tôju (1608-48) and Kaibara Ekiken (1630-1714), the author's friend argued, were labeled as eccentric yet were simultaneously portrayed as respectful and virtuous. In his foreword to the book, Kôkei relates this conversation, in which he explained to the critic:

> *What I want to record is slightly different from what you are thinking about. I would like you to broaden your interpretation [of eccentricity]. Some characters such as Baisao or Taigado [Ike no Taiga], for example, conform to the definition of eccentrics that you mentioned. [In addition, however,] various elders who act in benevolent ways and people filled with filial piety, in comparison to ordinary, worldly people, should be called eccentric [as well]. If I were to use an allegory, it is like a group of friends who spend the whole night drinking until they are so drunk that they no longer know the time or the date. If one among them still remembered these things, I imagine that he would be called eccentric. In the same way, in the eyes of a "drunkard" such as myself, individuals who take the proper path seem eccentric. I have recorded their biographies here because they might be helpful if people like myself knew about them. Even if it is said that the title of my book is deceiving, this is my only aim.*[6]

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[5] Zhuangzi, Burton Watson (trans.). *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. (Columbia University Press, 1970), 187. In Kinsei kijin-den, *kijin* 畸人 is described as synonymous with *kijin* 奇人. Ban Kôkei 伴蒿蹊 and Mori Senzô 森鉄三. *Kinsei kijin den* 『近世奇人伝』. (Tokyo : Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 13.
[6] Murakami Mamoru 村上護. *Ban Kôkei sen autosaidâ 119-nin kinsei kijinden* 『伴蒿蹊撰アウトサイダー119 人近世畸人伝』. Tokyo: Hanbai kyôikusha Shuppan Sâbisu, 1981), 81-2.

Siding with the critic who Kôkei describes in his foreword, some art historians have recently judged that, in light of Kôkei's subjective use of the term *kijin*, "we should not assume that he had a profound understanding of Daoism or a genuine commitment to its values." [7] Nonetheless, it would be an equally egregious mistake to overlook the interest in Daoist concepts that Kôkei clearly expresses, especially since that interest is a recurrent theme throughout the Japanese genre of eccentricity.

Some of the individuals who Kôkei describes in *Kinsei kijin-den* were known to be familiar with *Zhuangzi* as well. In his Chinese-style poems, Ishikawa Jôzan 石川丈山 (1583-1672) makes explicit reference to various Daoist texts, including several to *Zhuangzi*.[8] The monk Gensei 元政 (1623-1668) also alludes to *Zhuangzi* through several works,[9] including the following:

> *Swellings boil up on my body like fires raging;*
> *Why must these hundred ailments afflict me one after another?*
> *I can barely fold my legs to sit in dragon-coil position;*
> *My right side won't let me sleep in the lion's rest.*
> *These peaks and pits in my skin, as though stones were wrapped in it;*
> *Around my waist, these up and downs, like mountain ranges piled up.*

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[7] Rosenfield, John M. and Fumiko E. Cranston. *Extraordinary persons: Works by Eccentric, Nonconformist Japanese Artists of the Early Modern Era (1580-1868) in the Collection of Kimiko and John Powers.* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Art Museums, 1999), 26.

[8] Ishikawa Jôzan is discussed by Kôkei in his sequel, *Continued Biographies of Eccentrics in the Early Modern Period.* Ban Kôkei 伴蒿蹊. *Kinsei kijin-den / Zoku kinsei kijin-den* 『近世畸人伝・続近世畸人伝』. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1972), 261-7. Regarding Jôzan's references to *Zhuangzi*, see Watson, Burton. *Kanshi: The Poetry of Ishikawa Jôzan and Other Edo-Period Poets.* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1990), 24-25; Rimer, J. Thomas. *Shisendo, Hall of the Poetry Immortals.* (New York: Weatherhill, 1991), 50.

[9] Gensei is also discussed by Kôkei in his sequel, *Continued Biographies of Eccentrics in the Early Modern Period.* Ban Kôkei, *Kinsei kijin-den / Zoku kinsei kijin-den*, 267-76. Regarding Gensei's references to *Zhuangzi*, see Watson, Burton. *Grass Hill: Poems and Prose by the Japanese Monk Gensei.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 16, 21, 27, 79, 103.

In pain and grief I pass my days, but why should I resent it?
These "swelling tumors, protruding wens" are all the work of Heaven.[10]

The final line specifically alludes to the sixth chapter of *Zhuangzi*, in which Confucius explains to his disciples that eccentrics "look upon life as a swelling tumor, a protruding wen, and upon death as the draining of a sore or the bursting of a boil." [11] Due to the autobiographical nature of Gensei's work and his own reputation as an eccentric, it is tempting to interpret this poem not only as a bitter complaint about his physical ailments but also as a subtle declaration that he aspires to be a "companion of Heaven" who views life with such disregard.

One clear difference between the *Zhuangzi* and *Kinsei kijin-den* regards the subject of death and mortality. While the former maintains a relatively fatalistic view about human existence,[12] Kôkei's biographies make repeated reference to eremitism (Jpn: *sen* 仙), the method by which Daoist practitioners are said to attain immortality.[13] The fact that many of the eccentrics who Kôkei discusses identified themselves as Buddhists

[10] Watson. *Grass Hill*, 27. Translation by Watson.
[11] Ibid, 27.
[12] The subject of immortality is discussed in *Zhuangzi* only once. In Chapter 12 ("Heaven and Earth"), a border guard mentions it when discussing with Yao about the benefits of prayer, but this comment appears to be nothing more than an example of the guard's unenlightened state. "Long life means many shames," Yao reminds him. "[This is] of no use in nourishing Virtue." Zhuangzi, 130.
[13] Among the possible Japanese terms for eremitism, *inton* 隠遁, *in'itsu* 隠逸, and *yûin* 幽隠 are used broadly to refer to the lifestyles of various kinds of hermits, including Buddhists and those of other faiths. *Sen* 仙, however, has strong Daoist overtones. The *Shinmeikai Chinese-Japanese Dictionary* defines *sen* in the following ways: 1.) A *sennin* 仙人. A person who enters deep into the mountains and learns the divine art of immortality. See also *senka* 仙家. 2.) Longevity. 3.) The act of removing oneself from vulgar society. 4.) A virtuous person other than a Buddhist. 5.) Immortalism. Teachings about the art of immortality, beginning with those of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi. 6.) A euphemism for the emperor. 7.) agility like that of a *sennin*. 8.) Cent, penny. Of these various definitions, the first three are by far the most common. Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也 (ed.). *Shinmeikai kanwa jiten* 『新明解漢和辞典』. 19th ed. (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1974), 78.

may seem to contradict the existence of a Daoist theme in *Kinsei kijin-den*. In light of the extensive interaction between Buddhism and Daoism within China, a fact that historians have come to widely accept,[14] however, the idea that Daoist concepts have been translated into the context of Japanese Buddhism demands serious consideration.[15] Since Daoism, particularly the goal of liberating oneself from the corruption of society, came to be widely valued by Chinese literati, it was natural for Japanese literati of the Edo period, including several individuals discussed in *Kinsei kijin-den*, to explore it as well, regardless of the fact that Daoism never transferred to Japan as successfully as Buddhism did.[16] Though it is safe to presume that the extent to which such individuals placed their faith in immortalism varied widely, their interest in the ideals of religious Daoism is nonetheless obvious.

Murakami Mamoru (b. 1941) has observed that several of the individuals described in the *Kinsei kijin-den* developed their reputations as eccentrics for having forsaken prestigious positions in the military in order to become hermits.[17] Ishikawa Jôzan, one of the figures to whom Murakami refers, served Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-

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[14] Hong Ge 葛洪. *Bao-po-zi nei wai pian* 『抱朴子内外篇』. Shanghai: Han fen lou, 1922. As cited in De Bary, William Theodore et. al.. *Sources of Chinese Tradition,* 1st Edition. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 302.

[15] Although this interaction between two competing religions has come to be commonly described as "syncretism," scholars such as Charles D. Orzech prefer the term "translation" for the following reason: "To label a religion 'syncretic' or 'hybrid' (even with a hyphen, as in the term Buddho-Daoist) implies that there are two sorts of religions: the pure-bred and the bastard. But since all culture and religion are constituted in a continual process of encounter and mixture, to go on using such terms seems to me counterproductive.... At best, the language of mixture, even when couched in the technical-sounding terminology of syncretism, is sloppy and analytically useless. At worst, it is biased and pernicious." Charles D. Orzech, "Fang Yankou and Pudu: Translation, Metaphor, and Religious Identity." In Livia Kohn and Harold D. Roth, eds., *Daoist Identity: History, Lineage and Ritual*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 214.

[16] Tarô Odakane, *Tessai: Master of the Literati Style*. (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1965), 38-9.

[17] Besides Ishikawa Jôzan, the other soldiers who became hermits are the monk Gensei, Kinoshita Chôshôshi 木下長嘯子 (1569-1649), and Sakawada Kiroku 佐川田喜六 (1579-1643). Murakami, 31-6.

1616) in the so-called Summer Campaign of Osaka in 1615, but soon thereafter he left military service, became involved with the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, and entered Myôshinji temple.[18] In 1641, at the age of 58, Jôzan constructed Shisendô 詩仙堂 ("Hall of the Immortals of Poetry") where he isolated himself from society and focused upon writing poetry for over thirty years.[19] In his poems, he indicates a variety of possible reasons for having chosen such a lifestyle. Occasionally, he expresses his devotion to Buddhism, while at other times, he echoes Yoshida Kenko's 吉田兼好 (c. 1283 – c. 1350) enjoyment of leisure. In addition, however, he also makes specific references to Daoism and the Immortals, implying that his eremitism may have been partly motivated by a belief in immortalism:

> *"Self-Eulogy on His Birthday Portrait as Painted by Kanô Tanyû"*
> *Bamboo scepter in hand, leaning on armrest,*
> *Wearing dark robe and black cap.*
> *Silent is his noble visage;*
> *Brilliant is his spirit.*
> *He communicates with the Creator*
> *And nurtures the* Dao *within.*
> *A stubborn old man now eighty years old,*
> *A hermit of three-fold* yang.
> *And who is this hermit, you may ask?*
> *The Mountain Man of the Thirty-Six!* [20]

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[18] Ibid, 31.

[19] Rimer, vii; Murakami, 32. Although the meaning of the term *shisen* (詩仙 poetry immortals) is usually more of an honorific title than a religious term, Jôzan also hung above the entrance to his hermitage a wooden plaque inscribed with the name "The Lesser Cave Paradise," (小有洞, Ch: *Xiao yu dong*, Jpn: *Shoyudô*), a direct reference to a Daoist sacred cave in China. Jôzan further adopted "Lesser Cave Paradise" as one of his pen names. Rimer, 56. The intensity of Jôzan's eremitism also deserves clarification. Although he indeed resided at Shisendô for over three decades, several historians have noted that he was far from isolated from society and often received visitors. Rimer, 11-12.

[20] 「自賛狩野氏探幽斎__画壽像」如意隐几__褐鳥巾。默默晉貌昭昭精神。交游造物涵養道真。八秩頑老，三陽逸民。逸民謂誰。六六山人。Chinese version: Ogawa Takehiko 小川武彦. *Ishikawa Jôzan nenpu fuhen* 『石川丈山年譜附編』. (Musashimurayama-shi : Seishôdô, 1996), 582. English

"Pomegranate Blossoms"
The Queen Mother of the West planted them in her garden;
Zhang Qian transplanted them to the capital of Han.
The blossoms bloom, burning like fiery flames;
The seeds ripen, scattered bits of coral.[21]

As its title suggests, the former poem, a self-portrait, was originally inscribed on Kanô Tanyû's painting of the author.[22] After a brief visual description, Jôzan describes his eremitism in Daoist terms, claiming that he has reached such a venerable age through the bountiful accumulation of *yang* (positive spiritual energy). The latter poem, one of Jôzan's many poems about immortalism,[23] attests to the fact that he studied not only the writings of Zhuangzi and Laozi but also tales of religious Daoism. As previously mentioned in descriptions of paintings by Kanô Sansetsu and Soga Shôhaku, Xiwangmu 西王母 (Jpn: Seiôbô), Queen Mother of the West, stands as the ruler of the pantheon of immortals. Though she is usually depicted with a cluster of divine peaches as her attribute, Jôzan's fanciful description of the pomegranate demonstrates how this fruit eventually came to be similarly prized as a source of eternal sustenance.

If the order in which Kôkei arranged the biographies in *Kinsei kijin-den* reflects in some way the development of a theme regarding the Daoist nature of eccentricity, then it is not surprising that the concluding biography portrays an individual who is described

version: Rimer, 57. Translation by Jonathan Chaves. The term *nyoi* in Chaves' translation has been changed to "bamboo scepter" for the sake of clarification.

[21] 「石榴」王母植庭隅博望移漢都花開然焰火子老砕珊瑚簷蔔花. Chinese version: Ogawa, 532. English version: Rimer, 52. Translation by Jonathan Chaves.

[22] Rimer, 57.

[23] The other poems by Jôzan that refer to immortalism can be found in Rimer, 18, 35, 47, 54, 55, 56. This list does not include his many references to the Poetry Immortals.

not as capriciously entertaining Daoist ideas but as an ardent practitioner of religious Daoism who has achieved the ultimate goal of immortality. Hakuyûshi 白幽子 is described as a hermit who was at the time more than two hundred years old and who resided in a cave along the Shirogawa river in a deeply secluded section of Rakutô district, Kyoto.[24] The primary source for this biography, ironically, were Buddhist texts: *Yasen Kanna* 夜船閑話 (*Quiet Conversations on an Evening Boat*) and *Sendai Kibun* 闡提記聞 by the Zen priest and painter Hakuin Ekaku (1685-1768).[25] According to the biography, in approximately 1710, Hakuin was afflicted with serious mental illness that resulted in hallucinations, erratic mood swings and chills. When standard medical treatments proved to be ineffective, a doctor advised him to seek and consult Hakuyûshi. After searching for several days, Hakuin finally succeeded in locating the hermit's cave (Figure 70), which Kôkei describes in the following way:

> *When [Hakuin] peaked into the cave from a gap in the blinds, he saw Hakuyûshi sitting with legs folded together and his eyes closed. His black hair hung down to his knees, and his skin was glossy like that of a jujube fruit. He wore a thick, cotton robe, and he sat upon a mat of soft grass that he had spread on the floor. Upon his desk there were only copies of* Zhongyong 中庸 [The Doctrine of the Mean], Zhuangzi, *and* Jingangjing 金剛経 [The Diamond Sutra], *and Hakuin saw nothing that could be used for eating, drinking, or sleeping. From what he could see, the cave looked so clean and pure that he wondered if this person was human.*[26]

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[24] Murakami, 413. Evidence such as Hakuyûshi's gravestone in a Kyoto cemetery north of Shinnyodô 真如堂 temple indicates that he did in fact exist. He was also known as Jishun 慈俊, and his actual dates were 1646-1709. Though Hakuin records that his meeting with Hakuyûshi took place in 1710, Murakami considers several possible reasons for this discrepancy, including the possibility that Hakuin mistook the date and that the meeting actually took place shortly before Hakuyûshi's death. Ibid, 420.
[25] Ibid, 418.
[26] Ibid, 414.

While the texts on Hakuyûshi's desk, which deal with Confucianism, philosophical Daoism, and Buddhism, respectively, may display the breadth of the hermit's religious and philosophical studies, the blackness of his hair and the smooth texture of his skin – clear indications of his enduring youth – as well as the lack of items used for the most fundamental of human activities – implying his inexhaustible vitality – convey meanings unmistakably associated with religious Daoism.

When Hakuin intrudes upon the hermit's meditation and, describing his malady, implores the hermit for help, the advice that Hakuyûshi offers reiterates his image as a Daoist master. He consults a variety of Buddhist sutras and other books, but the source from which he draws a diagnosis is the 8th century BCE *Zhouyi* 周易 (*The Changes of Zhou*, also known as the *Yijing* 易經 or *The Classic of Changes*). Quoting extensively from this text, Hakuyûshi explains that Hakuin's ailment has been caused by excessive spiritual training, and he warns that if the Zen priest were to continue such meditations, his health would be permanently destroyed.[27] Historically, the *Zhouyi* has been utilized by practitioners of both Daoism and Confucianism,[28] but during the reign of Emperor Qin Shi Huang (ca. 259 BCE - 210 BCE), it came to be primarily interpreted as a Daoist text.[29]

Hakuyûshi teaches Hakuin a technique with which the Zen priest can heal himself, and the way the hermit describes the cure confirms his identity as a Daoist master. Based upon concepts from the *Zhouyi*, the technique involves distributing the positive and

[27] Ibid, 414.
[28] Wilhelm, Richard, trans. *The I Ching, or Book of Changes*. (Princeton University Press, 1950), xlvii.
[29] Ibid, lx.

negative forces evenly throughout one's body. If Hakuin earnestly perseveres in achieving this state of internal harmony, Hakuyûshi assures, the priest "can become an eternally young and healthy immortal."[30] Should Hakuin ignore this advice, the hermit further warns, "your illness will not be cured, of course you will not become an immortal, you will become unable to achieve any kind of virtue, and spiritual development of any sort will become impossible."[31]

Ban Kôkei concludes the biography as well as the book in general by celebrating the efficacy of Hakuyûshi's medical knowledge. As a result of obediently following the sage's instructions, Hakuin apparently recovered from his illness within the following three years. In addition, he developed such an ability to mentally regulate his own health that, in his old age, even without the aid of a heater or warm clothes, he did not fall sick. Kôkei leaves the reader with this image of the priest's renewed health and longevity, making no mention of Hakuin's eventual death in 1768.[32] It is difficult to deny the way in which Kôkei focuses here upon the concept of immortalism. Just as the author highlights the individual accomplishments of eccentrics and thereby attempts to promote public acceptance of them, he similarly argues for the validity of religious Daoism within the primarily Buddhist society of late eighteenth century Japan.

It is perhaps needless to say that the interest Ban Kôkei and Mikuma Katen express in both eccentrics who discussed immortalism, such as Ishikawa Jôzan, as well as

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[30] Murakami, 416.
[31] Ibid, 416-8.
[32] Ibid, 418.

those who were said to have attained immortality, such as Hakuyûshi, was likely fueled by their own exposure to literature about religious Daoism. As an artist who specialized in depictions of Buddhist and Daoist characters,[33] Katen would certainly have been familiar with such texts if they existed in Kyoto, particularly if the texts had illustrations that could be used for visual reference. The authors had at least one such literary work at their disposal. As indicated by Japanese artworks that appropriated its imagery, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* (仙仏奇踪 Ch: *Xianfo qizong*; Jpn: *Senbutsu kisô*; also known as 仙仏奇蹤 Ch: *Xianfo qizong*; Jpn: *Senbutsu kishô*), an illustrated anthology of Daoist immortals, bodhisattvas, and Buddhist patriarchs compiled by the scholar and hermit Hong Yingming 洪應明 (Jpn: Kô Yômei) in 1602,[34] was available in Japan during the early seventeenth century, and stylistic similarities suggest that Kôkei and Katen had used it to some extent as a literary model for *Kinsei kijin-den*.[35]

The artists whose visual quotations of *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* help to establish the time period by which the text had reached Japan are, not

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[33] Ibid, 421. This genre of art, known in Japanese as *dôshaku jinbutsu-ga* 道釈人物画, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

[34] William Scott Wilson describes Hong Yingming, also known as Hong Zicheng 洪自誠 (Jpn: Kô Jisei), as a scholar who "lived as a recluse or near recluse, probably in the mountains of southeastern China near the lower Yangtze River." Hong Zicheng. *The Roots of Wisdom: Saikontan*. (Tokyo, New York: Kodansha International, 1984), 7.

[35] The images and biographies of various characters from *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, such as that of Laozi (Figure 2), were appropriated by Wang Qi 王圻 (b. 1565) and Wang Siyi 王思義 in 1607 for their encyclopedia *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms* (*Sancai Tuhui* 三才図会), which was published in 1609. These biographies were similarly copied by Terajima Ryôan 寺島良安 in his 1712 publication *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms of China and Japan* (*Wakan Sansai Zue* 『和漢三才図会』). While either *Sancai Tuhui* or *Wakan Sansai Zue* may have had an influence upon the format of Ban Kôkei's collection of biographies, Terajima's biographies of immortals lack illustrations, and his illustrations of Buddhist figures are too crudely rendered to have had much influence upon artists such as Matabei, Sansetsu and Shôhaku. Little, Stephen. *Realm of the Immortals: Daoism in the Arts of China: The Cleveland Museum of Art, February 10-April 10, 1988*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art in Cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1988), 26.

coincidentally, some of the eccentrics who Tsuji Nobuo discusses in *Kisô no keifu* and other works. Perhaps the image that was first appropriated was that of Laozi astride a water buffalo.[36] Although this motif later enjoyed overwhelming popularity in the context of Daoist art, the portrait of the philosopher in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* (Figure 71) appears to have been one of the earliest examples. Iwasa Matabei's "Laozi Crossing the River (*Rôshi Shukkan-zu* 老子出関図)" (Figure 72), a hanging scroll that was previously a part of the so-called "Kanedani Folding Screen 金谷屏風," retains only a few elements of Hong Yingming's image.[37] The road slopes precipitously down to the left, and vegetation - a pine tree in the original and stalks of bamboo in Matabei's - borders the right edge. In other respects, the two pictures are distinctly different. With ink washes, Matabei darkens the body of the water buffalo as well as the background, thereby accentuating the sage's pristine robe, a symbol of his spiritual purity. Matabei's use of *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* in the development of his painting is further substantiated by a letter written by the merchant, literatus, and book publisher Sumi no Kura Soan 角倉素庵 (1571-1633) in which he mentions that he had given the

[36] Though Laozi is usually associated with philosophical Daoism, he appears in Yingming's text as an immortal with the alternate name of Supreme Venerable Sovereign (太上老君 Ch: Taishang Laojun; Jpn: Taijô Rôkun). Hong Yingming 洪應明. *Xianfo qizong* 『仙佛奇蹤』. Vol. 1. 3 volumes. (Kyoto: Kyoto University Library, 2001), 2. Regarding Laozi's dual persona, see Shimode, 7.
[37] Tsuji Nobuo has speculated that Matabei's image was derived from *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*. Iwasa Matabei and Tsuji Nobuo. *Iwasa Matabei*. (Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1980), 106.

book to Matabei.[38] Soan's death in 1633 proves that the Daoist text had been imported to Japan more than one hundred and fifty years before the publication of *Kinsei kijin-den*.[39]

"Laozi and Landscapes (*Rôshi sansui-zu* 老子山水図)," a reinterpretation of Laozi's image by Soga Shôhaku more than a century after Matabei's, attests to the enduring popularity of *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* throughout the Edo period. (Figure 73) Though drawing from Matabei's precedent, Shôhaku makes several revisions. While maintaining the sharp diagonal that divides the background, he raises it and transforms it into the edge of a distant mountain. Furthermore, he inverts the value contrast that defines this diagonal, throwing the mountainside into shadow and creating a refreshing sense of sunlight at the top of the scroll. Other details indicate that Shôhaku was intimately familiar with Yingming's original image as well. The water buffalo's left forehoof is drawn back, a gesture mirrored by the forward sweep of its tail. In addition, Laozi holds a scroll in his right hand and rests it in the crook of his opposing arm. Shôhaku's modification of the vegetation to the sage's right is a clear example of the artist's wit and creative brilliance: in place of Yingming's pine tree and Matabei's bamboo stalks, he paints the branch of a prunus. Thereby, the three images form a kind of triptych in which Laozi's portrait is decorated with the "three friends of winter,"

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[38] Miyajima Shin'ichi, Satô Yasuhiro, George Kuwayama. *Japanese Ink Painting*. (Los Angeles, California: The Museum, 1985), 90.

[39] Sandy Kita has proposed that, since Soan was a close friend of Tawaraya Sôtatsu, who was also known to have used images from *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, it is very likely that Soan gave Sôtatsu a copy of the text as well. Certainly, Soan's role in the dissemination of Daoist literature in Japan is a topic that deserves further research. Kita, Sandy. *The Last Tosa: Iwasa Katsumochi Matabei, bridge to Ukiyo-e*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 134.

symbols of longevity that aptly reflect religious Daoism's pervasive theme of immortalism.

Kanô Sansetsu (1590-1651) is also known to have utilized the images of Daoist masters from *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* in his paintings, but he translated them into surprisingly different contexts, thereby obscuring the religious meaning of the image. His depiction of Zhongli Quan (Jpn: Shôriken) in "Cultivation in the Four Seasons (*Shiki kôsaku-zu byôbu* 四季耕作図屏風)" (Figures 74-75) is an interesting example of this tendency, for the work, in faithful adherence to the traditions of this painting theme, is nothing more than a detailed description of farming techniques.[40] Using the technique of multi-temporal depiction (*iji dôzu* 異時同図), Sansetsu leads the viewer from right to left through the annual tasks of a rice farmer, particularly those during the months of April through October. On the far right of the right screen, a farmer's modest home stands surrounded by a small grove of trees, and a few family members can be seen standing close to the main entrance. (Figure 76) Slightly further to the left, a middle-aged man wades through a paddy, scattering the seeds that he carries in a basket slung over his arm. (Figure 77) The rice seedlings that develop in the following weeks are then gathered (Figure 78) and transplanted in a neighboring field. (Figure 79) The field is periodically irrigated with a manually operated water-wheel (Figure 80), and in the autumn, the rice is harvested, bundled, threshed, and milled. (Figures 81-82)

[40] The painting theme of rice cultivation through the four seasons (*shiki kôshoku-zu*) originated in China with paintings of rice cultivation and sericulture (耕織図 Ch: *gengzhi tu*; Jpn: *kôshoku-zu*) and became popular among Japanese artists of the Kanô school during the Muromachi period (1392-1573). The extent to which Sansetsu followed the imagery, composition, and style of his predecessors is obvious when comparing this work with "Rice Cultivation in the Four Seasons," a pair of six-fold screens in the John C. Weber Collection attributed to Kanô Motonobu (1476-1559).

In the right screen of Sansetsu's work, in the third panel from the left, a half-naked, bearded man is shown walking along a path between two of the rice fields. (Figure 83) Okudaira Shunroku (b. 1953) has recognized that this figure is meant to depict Zhongli Quan (Jpn: Shôriken), and he maintains that Sansetsu borrowed the image from *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas.*[41] A comparison with the image of Zhongli Quan in the text reveals several minor discrepancies, but the general characteristics of the figure, including his receded hairline, his beard, his naked torso, and his protruding belly are indeed consistent. (Figure 84) Sansetsu has even retained the figure's attribute, a fan with which he is able to revive the dead. In the pair of folding screens, Zhongli uses the fan to shade his head, while in Yingming's print, he holds the fan at his waist. (Figure 85) The angle of the immortal's body and head as seen in Sansetsu's screens is undeniably a mirror image of the portrait in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, and so to the extent that one can trust Okudaira's presumption that no other images of Zhongli Quan were available to Sansetsu, the artist may indeed have used *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* as a visual reference.

When considering Okudaira's claim that Sansetsu also appropriated Yingming's illustration of Zhang Daoling (Jpn: Chôdôryô), at first glance, the only obvious similarity linking the two figures is their sweeping arm gesture.[42] (Figures 86-87.) Closer inspection, however, reveals various, identical details in the portraits. These features

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[41] Okudaira Shunroku 奥平俊六. "Visual Quotations by Sôtatsu: Focusing upon Sumi Painting." In, Kanô Hiroyuki 狩野博幸 et. al.. *Sôtatsu to Rinpa no Genryû* 『宗達と琳派の源流』. (Tokyô: Shueisha, 1993), 114.

[42] Ibid, 114. Daoling (active ca. 142 CE) established the *Wudou Mi Dao* 五斗米道 ("Way of Five Bushels of Rice," Jpn: *Gotobeidô*) sect of religious Daoism and, like Laozi, ultimately came to be revered as an immortal. Shimode, 5.

include the three-quarter view of the head, the contour of the nose, the shape of the left ear, and the wrinkle delineating the bottom of the left cheek. (Figures 88-89.)

In both of these examples of appropriation, Sansetsu translates the image of a character from religious Daoism into a distinctly different context, and as a result, the identity of the figure in the final painting becomes obscure. In "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," Zhongli Quan seems to become little more than a common farmhand, and with a *hossu* (fly swatter) in his right hand, Zhang Daoling is transformed to some extent into Vimalakirti (Jpn: Yuima), the contemporary of Shakyamuni who, as described in the "Vimalakirti Sutra," debates the doctrine of Hinayana Buddhism with Bodhisattva Manjusri (Jpn: Manjû bosatsu). Okudaira maintains that painters such as Sansetsu are in general far more concerned about the shape and composition of a portrait than its essential theological meaning. However, he also concedes that, according to *History of Japanese Painting* (*Honcho Gashi*), Sansetsu was extremely particular about his pictorial sources,[43] and Tsuji Nobuo has further mentioned that the artist was an extremely well-versed and enthusiastic scholar of Chinese classical literature.[44] For these reasons, it would be hasty to assume that the artist would casually discard the original theological interpretation of the images. At the very least, a viewer should remain conscious of the way in which these figures were originally used as symbols of the Daoist concept of immortalism.

The popularity of *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* throughout the Edo period, as indicated by the appropriation of its imagery not only by the artists

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[43] Ibid, 5.
[44] Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 50.

described above but also by Kanô Sanraku (1559-1635), Ike no Taiga (1723-76), Tawaraya Sôtatsu (active ca. 1794), Yamamoto Bai'itsu (1783-1856), Tanomura Chikuden (1777-1835), and Tomioka Tessai (1836-1924), leaves little doubt that Mikuma Katen, a professional painter of Buddhist and Daoist imagery, and Ban Kôkei were familiar with it.[45] Moreover, a comparison of *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* and *Kinsei kijin-den* in terms of writing style, format, and theme suggests that Katen and Kôkei may well have used the Chinese text as a literary model. The sequence of ideas in each of Kôkei's biographies conspicuously adhere to a structure found in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*. In the latter work, the author first lists a character's various names and indicates his or her social position by mentioning his or her occupation or well-known relatives. He then mentions an unusual talent or skill that the character possesses, relates the circumstances responsible for the character's fame, and concludes with a word about the character's death or disappearance. The following biography of the immortal Wangzi Qiao 王子橋 (Jpn: Ôshikyô) offers an example (Figure 90):

> *Wangzi Qiao was the heir apparent, named Jin, of King Ling of the Zhou (r. 571-545 B.C.E.). An adept at imitating the song of the phoenix on a reed-pipe organ, he wandered between the Yin and Luo rivers [in Henan]. The Daoist master Lord Fuqu introduced him to Mount Songgao [Songshan, Henan]. When thirty years later he was being sought out on the mountain, he met with Bo Liang and said to him, "Tell my family to expect me on the seventh day of the seventh month on the peak of Mount Goushi [in the Songshan range]." On the appointed day, he did indeed alight on the mountain peak, riding a white crane. They saw him from afar but were unable to reach him. He raised his hand to take leave of the men of his time. A few days later, he disappeared.*

[45] Okudaira, 110.

> *Thereupon shrines were erected beneath Mount Goushi and on top of Songgao.*[46]

Biographies in *Kinsei kijin-den* closely follow this structure as well. The chapter on Inshi Sekiga 隠士石臥 (1616-1686), for example, begins by mentioning that his pseudonym was Nagano Uneme, describing his service to Governor Sanda Nobuyuki of the Izu islands, and praising his abilities in kendo and calligraphy. Kôkei then discusses at length Sekiga's poetry, which had so profoundly affected some of his admirers that they were able to recite his works from memory years later. It concludes by stating that in 1713, after a period of eremitism, he died at the age of seventy at Numazu Station along the Tôkaidô road.[47]

Another noticeable similarity between *Kinsei kijin-den* and *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* is their format. They are both anthologies of several dozen short biographies, each of which ranges in length from a single paragraph to several pages.[48] Slightly less than half of the characters in both texts are illustrated, and these images are usually full-page portraits that depict the subject in full figure in a simply described

[46] Hong Yingming, *Xianfo qizong*, vol. 1, 24. Translated by William Theodore de Bary and quoted in De Bary, William Theodore and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2nd Edition. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 394-5.

[47] Murakami, 184-5.

[48] *Kinsei kijin-den* is a compilation of 88 biographies arranged into five categories: benevolence and filial piety, faith and blessings, enlightened poets, disregard of public taste, and eccentrics of various talents. *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* is a collection of 305 biographies divided into four volumes, each with a particular theme. "Traces of Hermits" (「消揺墟」, Ch: *Xiaoyaoxu*, Jpn: *Shôyô-kyo*) describes the pantheon of Daoist immortals, "A Selection of Elders" (「長生詮」, Ch: *Zhangshengquan*, Jpn: *Chôsei-sen*) discusses the lives of noteworthy Daoist hermits, "The Silent and Brilliant Realm" (「寂光境」, Ch: *Jiguangjing*, Jpn: *Jakkô-kyô*) portrays various Buddhist exemplars, and "Secrets of Nonbeing" (「無生訣」, Ch: *Wushengjue*, Jpn: *Mushôketsu*) honors the founders of Buddhism. This last volume is further subdivided into two sections that deal with the founders of Indian Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism, respectively.

environment. Some of Katen's illustrations, in fact, are almost identical to Yingming's. (Figures 91-92.)

Perhaps the most striking characteristic that the two texts share is their glorification of eremitism and abnormality. Without exception, the characters described in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* achieve their state of divine status and fantastic powers by retreating from society, as if the very act of reclusion were a form of spiritual training. The bizarre nature of the powers they thereby develop demands their further separation from ordinary people. However, this isolation the characters experience is described in both books not as social alienation but as a sort of spiritual transcendence. In this way, the topic of eccentricity, as expressed in both artwork and biographical sketches, is inextricably bound together with concepts of religious Daoism, particularly immortalism. This Daoist interpretation of eccentricity, furthermore, is not merely limited to the writings of Ban Kôkei and Mikuma Katen. Rather, as will be discussed in the following chapter, it applies to all of the visual artists who have been discussed thus far.

Figure 70. Mikuma Katen, *Kinsei kijin-den*, detail: illustration of Hakuyûshi; 1790, ink on paper.

Figure 71. Hong Yingming, ***Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas***, detail: illustration of Laozi (Jpn: Rôshi); 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 72. Iwasa Matabei, "Laozi Crossing the River (*Rôshi Shukkan-zu*)," formerly part of the "Kanedani Folding Screen," early 17th century, ink on paper, hanging scroll, Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 73. Soga Shôhaku, "Laozi and Landscapes (*Rôshi sansui-zu*)," set of three hanging scrolls; detail: Laozi (center scroll). 1770-81, ink on paper, 96.7 x 33.1 cm,

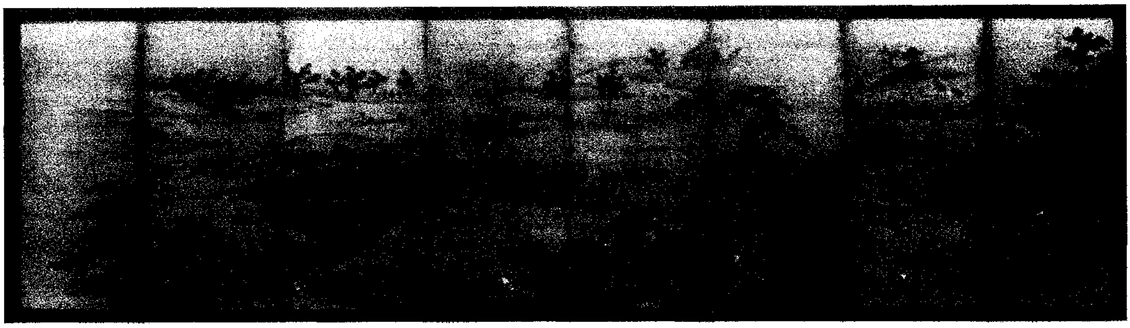

Figure 74. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation through the Four Seasons (*Shiki kôsaku-zu byôbu*)", detail: right screen; early 17th century, pair of 8-fold screens, color on paper, 101.1 x 363.6 cm each, Tokyo University of Arts and Music University Museum.

Figure 75. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation through the Four Seasons (*Shiki kôsaku-zu byôbu*)", detail: left screen; early 17th century, pair of 8-fold screens, color on paper, 101.1 x 363.6 cm each, Tokyo University of Arts and Music University Museum.

Figure 76. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," right screen, detail: elder in front of his home.

Figure 77. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," right screen, detail: man sowing seeds.

Figure 78. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," right screen, detail: gathering rice seedlings

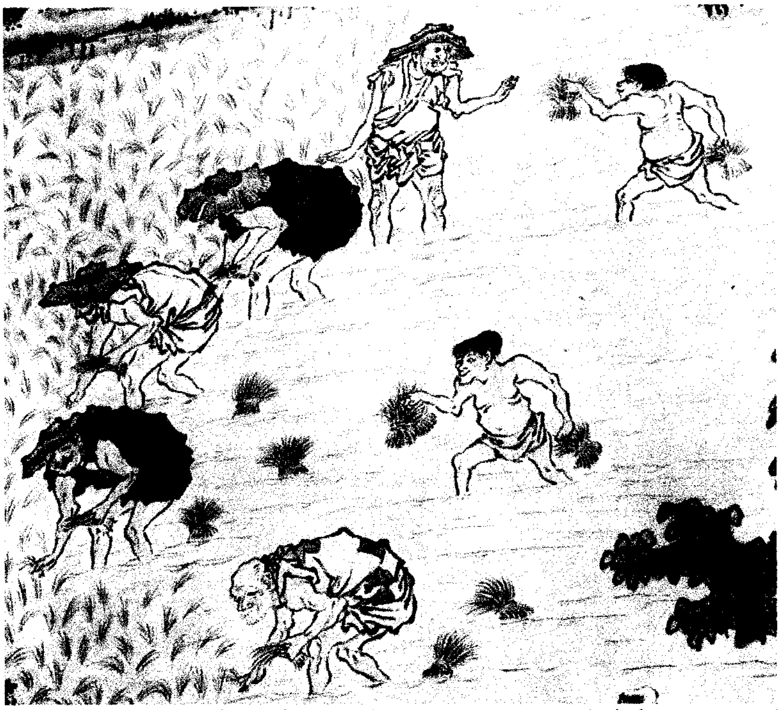

Figure 79. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," right screen, detail: transplanting the rice seedlings.

Figure 80. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," right screen, detail: men and young boy irrigating the rice field by pedalling a water wheel.

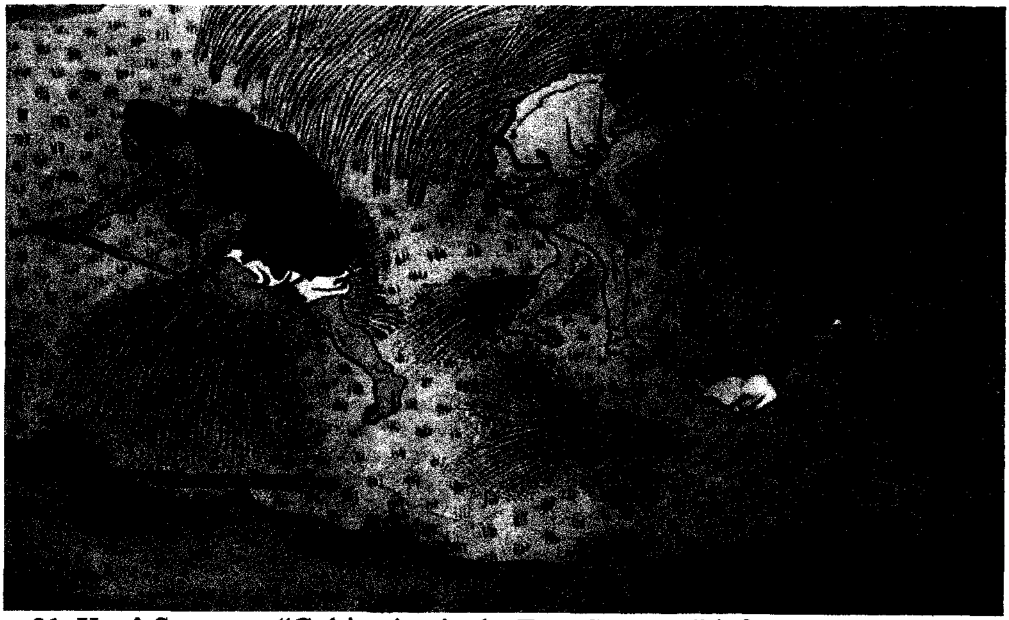

Figure 81. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," left screen, detail: men reaping and bundling the rice.

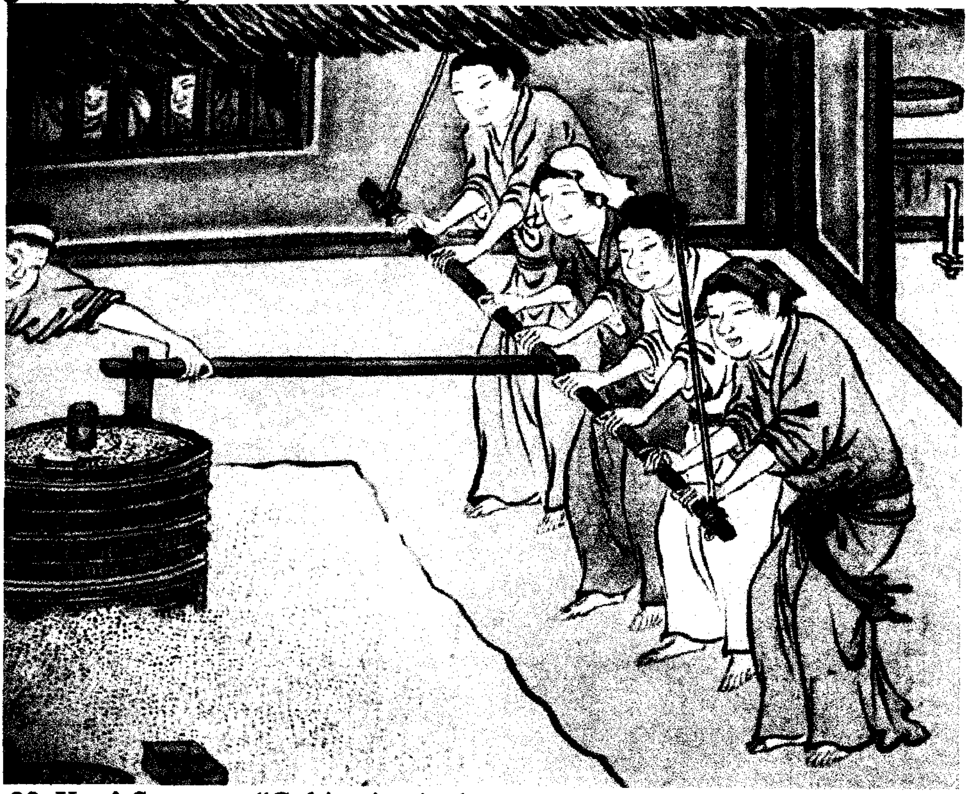

Figure 82. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," left screen, detail: women milling some of the rice with a millstone.

Figure 83. Kanô Sansetsu, "Cultivation in the Four Seasons," right screen, detail: Zhongli Quan (Jpn: Shôriken) walking between the rice fields.

Figure 84. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Zhongli Quan (Jpn: Shôriken); 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

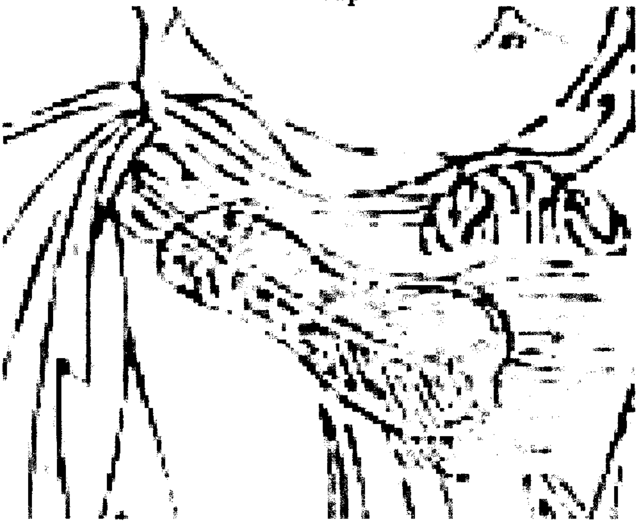

Figure 85. Detail of Figure 84: Zhongli Quan's fan.

Figure 86. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Zhang Daoling (Jpn: Chôdôryô); 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 87. Kanô Sansetsu, "Vimalakirti (Jpn: *Yuima koji-zu*)," early 17th century, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 117.0 x 45.5 cm, private collection.

Figure 88. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: Zhang Daoling's face.

Figure 89. Kanô Sansetsu, "Vimalakirti," detail: Vimalakirti's face.

Figure 90. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Wangzi Qiao (Jpn: Ôshikyô); 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 91. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Bodhidharma (Jpn: Bodaidaruma); 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 92. Mikuma Katen, *Kinsei kijin-den*, detail: illustration of Monk Yôren, 1790, ink on paper, woodblock print.

Chapter Four:
Visual Evidence of Daoist Influence upon the Japanese Definition of Eccentricity

Fanciful imagery, elaborate iconography, and an ever-present sense of theatricality made the tales of religious Daoism particularly suitable for visual depiction. It is not surprising, therefore, that while immortalism was a prominent theme in literary works of the Edo period such as the *Kinsei kijin-den*, it was all the more passionately investigated by painters and printmakers of the time. As motifs of classical Chinese origin, portraits of Daoist transcendents quickly developed a reputation within Japan as products of the Kanô school of painting. Opulent works commissioned by military rulers and installed in public spaces such as Ryôanji temple (Figure 93) reminded viewers of the government's cultural ties to China and functioned as visual metaphors for the shogunate, implying that extraordinary power, manifested in the form of either military strength or supernatural talent, was an indisputable sign of spiritual enlightenment. In contrast to these state-sponsored artworks, Daoist imagery that was privately produced by independent painters and printmakers appear to have been motivated far more by an interest in its fundamental theological meaning. The works of Bada Shanren, Iwasa Matabei, Kanô Sansetsu, Itô Jakuchû, Soga Shôhaku, Nagasawa Rosetsu, and Utagawa Kuniyoshi, once iconographically identified, reveal distinct attitudes regarding the subject of immortalism,

and when considered collectively, these works encourage an interpretation of eccentricity based upon this tenet of religious Daoism.

Bada Shanren: Immortalism and Social Liberation

Since both religious Daoism and the discussion of eccentricity originated from China, the fact that Chinese eccentric artists displayed great interest in the transcendents may not be surprising, but the inclusion of Bada Shanren, a former Buddhist monk who completely eschewed figuration, within this group of artists dramatically illustrates the extent of immortalism's pervasive influence upon the genre of eccentric art. In addition to his paintings of wildlife, Bada's works of calligraphy, including several that deal with Daoist themes, have recently come to public attention. "Transcription of the 'Holy Mother Manuscript' with Colophon" (Figures 94-95) is based upon an essay attributed to the monk and calligrapher Huaisu (ca. 725 – ca. 799) that was preserved as a stone carving after the author's death. It is believed that Bada himself made a rubbing of this carving and thereby transcribed the text in the winter of 1698.[1] Huaisu's text is a hagiography of Xiwangmu 西王母(Jpn: Seiôbô), Queen Mother of the East:

> *The Holy Mother in her heart approved the ultimate instructions of the sages.... Whereupon, the perfected one, Lord Liu... provided her with magical formulas and fed her on perfected elixirs, so that her divine appearance was instantly transformed, her flesh and bones grew slender and lovely, and setting herself apart from the common masses, she distanced herself from carnal affections. At first, her husband Mister Du was greatly enraged and reprimanded her for neglecting her wifely duties, but the Holy*

[1] Chang, Joseph. *In Pursuit of Heavenly Harmony: Paintings and Calligraphy by Bada Shanren from the Estate of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art: Smithsonian Institution in association with Weatherhill, Inc., 2003), 88, 154.

> ***Mother went on as she was and paid him no heed, until in time he brought suit against her, which led to her confinement. While detained in prison, all of a sudden she was arrayed in rainbows, and an immortal's carriage descended from the air, inquiring for her as it approached the door. Looking back, she called to her two daughters and together they ascended, climbing into the void.***[2]

Bada's transcription has been interpreted by some art historians as an example of his pious devotion to religious Daoism. Joseph Chang's comments about another Daoist text that the artist transcribed fourteen years earlier are entirely applicable to this work as well. Though religious texts are customarily transcribed in regular script, which is considered to be more dignified, Chang nonetheless detects in Bada's writing a sense of solemnity: few of his characters interconnect, and it is fairly easy to read, as if the artist transcribed the text for pedagogical as well as aesthetic purposes.[3] (Figure 94) This interpretation is further supported by the artist's use of the seal "Immortality is achievable" (*Ke de shenxian*; Figure 96) to mark this scroll as well as by the short colophon following the transcription, in which the artist exclaims, "The writing of Lutian'an [Huaisu], how can one not treasure it!"[4]

Among the various aspects and interpretations of immortalism, the concept of an individual's social liberation seemed particularly appealing to the artist. When comparing Huaisu's text to Hong Yingming's description of Xiwangmu in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, for example, one finds a much heavier emphasis upon the protagonist's escape from both prison and her domineering husband via her

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[2] Ibid, 88.
[3] Ibid, 18.
[4] Ibid, 89. Bada used the seal on several works from 1686 until his death circa 1705. Ibid, 24.

transformation into an immortal.[5] This theme of liberation is echoed in several other calligraphic works by Bada, including "Congratulating Pei Tingyu on Passing the Exams in Shu" (Figure 97). The text upon which this artwork was based is the first half of an 8 line poem in which the author, Li Bo (active 870s-880s), congratulates a close friend on his successful completion of the civil service examination, comparing this academic accomplishment to a Daoist hermit's long-awaited spiritual transcendence:

> *At Tongliang, a thousand leagues, the clouds of dawn disperse,*
> *For the list of the immortals has come from the Purple Palace.*
> *In heaven above you already spread your newly feathered wings,*
> *And shall not return to the dust and grime of the world before.*[6]

The list of newly deified immortals that has been announced from the Celestial Emperor's Purple Palace, Chang explains, symbolizes an announcement posted by emperor Li Yen (reigned 873-888) that lists those scholars who have successfully completed the civil service examination.[7] Of particular interest is the final line, which implies that Pei Tingyu has succeeded in not only securing prestigious employment but also in escaping from the wretched social conditions that he endured while preparing for the exam. Considering the political turmoil that the artist witnessed during his lifetime, Bada Shanren's use of Daoist imagery as a means of meditating upon the goal of social liberation seems entirely fitting.

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[5] Hong Yingming 洪應明. *Xianfo qizong* 『仙佛奇蹤』. Vol. 1. 3 volumes. (Kyoto: Kyoto University Library, 2001), 12-13.
[6] Chang, 128.
[7] Ibid, 161.

Iwasa Matabei: Immortalism and the Sarcastic Glorification of Nobility

In comparison to Bada Shanren, most of the Japanese eccentrics discussed by Tsuji Nobuo referred to Daoist concepts through far more visually expressive works of figurative art. Iwasa Matabei contributed several such paintings in which all of the immortals portrayed are presented as members of the noble class, but this fact becomes apparent only after the iconography of the images is sufficiently decoded. "The Transcendent Lady Nongyu" (Figure 98), a work formerly displayed as part of the so-called Kanedani screens, a pair of six-panel folding screens held by the Kanedani family of Fukui City,[8] is based upon Hong Yingming's hagiography of Xiaoshi (簫史, Jpn: Shôshi; Figure 99). In the Period of Spring and Autumn Annals (772-481 BCE), Nongyu (弄玉, Jpn: Rôgyoku), daughter of Lord Mu of the Qin, and her husband Xiaoshi learned to play the flute (簫, Ch: *xiao*; Jpn: *shô*) and became skillful enough to imitate the cry of a phoenix. When they played, supernatural creatures would come flying down to greet them. One day, Lady Nongyu mounted a phoenix, her husband mounted a dragon, and they ascended into the sky, never to be seen again.[9] In Matabei's version of the story, Lady Nongyu is calling a phoenix with her pan pipes (排簫, Ch: *paixiao*; Jpn: *paishô*), and compositional similarities with Hong's illustration, particularly the appearance of the phoenix, suggest that the Japanese artist may have used *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* as a model for this painting. (Figures 99-100.)

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[8] Iwasa Matabei 岩佐又兵衛 and Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄. *Iwasa Matabei* 『岩佐又兵衛』 (Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1980), 128.
[9] Ibid, 128.

The depiction of Zhang Liang 張良(Jpn: Chôryô; 168-137 BCE) returning Huang Shigong 黄石公 (Jpn: Kô Sekikô) his shoe (Figure 101), as found in Matabei's "Scrolls of Legendary Chinese and Japanese Figures," is based upon a Chinese fable found in Sima Qian's 1st century BCE text *Records of the Grand Historian* (Ch: *Shiji*). Sima's entry discusses how Zhang, the Marquis of Liu, encountered the hermit Huang while strolling along an embankment in Xiapei. Huang's shoe has just fallen off and rolled down the hill, and after Zhang fetches it, Huang rewards the marquis with a magical book on military strategy that guarantees success in any military campaign. After using the text to assist Liu Bang (Jpn: Ryuuhou 劉邦) in the overthrow of the Qin emperor and the foundation of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), Zhang decides to abandon his worldly ties and study Daoist magic from the immortal Chisongzi 赤松子 (Jpn: Seki Shôshi; Figure 102).[10]

From its literary origin in the 1st century BCE, the tale of Zhang Liang and Huang Shigong gradually evolved as it was transmitted to Japan. During the Muromachi era (1392 – 1573 CE), Nobumitsu (d. 1516 CE) adapted this story for the Noh stage and in doing so dramatically altered the circumstances surrounding Zhang's and Huang's initial encounter. In his play "Chôryô," the hermit is presented riding across a bridge on horseback when his shoe falls off, and upon descending into the river below to retrieve it, the marquis is suddenly confronted by an enormous dragon. Zhang succeeds in driving off the beast, which the hermit later describes as an incarnation of bodhisattva

[10] Sima Qian. *Records of the Grand Historian: Han Dynasty*, vol. 1 (Hong Kong; New York: Renditions-Columbia University Press, 1993), 100-112.

Avalokitesvara sent to test Zhang's courage.[11] Matabei's image closely resembles Nobumitsu's interpretation of the scene with the single exception of Zhang's relationship with the dragon. (Figure 101.) The marquis calmly stands on its head, and the beast obediently raises him up beside the bridge so that he can return the hermit's shoe. Rather than as a mortal who strikes at supernatural beings out of fear, Zhang is presented as a self-assured adept of Daoist sorcery strikingly similar to Sesson Shukei's (circa 1504-1583) depiction of the transcendent Lu Dongbin. (Figure 103.)

"Luofu Xian" (Jpn: Rafusen; literally, "The Immortal of Mount Luofu;" Figure 104), also formerly exhibited as part of the Kanedani Folding Screen,[12] portrays a character that can be traced back to a short story in "Longcheng lu" 龍城録, written by the Tang Dynasty author Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819 CE).[13] The tale takes place during the Sui dynasty (581-619) when Zhao Shixiong (趙師雄, Jpn: Chô Shiyû) traveled to Mount Luofu 羅浮 (Jpn: Rafu). He was about to enter a liquor shop to warm himself when a woman dressed in white clothes and wearing light makeup came out of the shop to welcome him. A fragrance wafted about her, and she spoke eloquently. While they drank sake together and chatted, Zhao became drunk and fell asleep, and when he

[11] Fenollosa, Ernest Francisco and Ezra Pound. *The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977), 131-34.
[12] Iwasa, 128.
[13] 「隋開皇中趙師雄遷羅浮一日天寒日暮在醉醒間因憩僕車於松林間酒肆傍舎見一女子淡粧素服出迓師雄時已昏黒残雪對月色微明師雄喜之與之語但覚芳香襲人語言極清麗因與之扣酒家門得数盃相與飲少項有一綠衣童来笑歌戲舞亦自可観項醉寢師雄亦懵然但覚風寒相襲久之時東方已白師雄起視乃在大梅花樹下上有翠羽啾嘈相顧月落参横但惆悵而爾」. "Liu xian sheng long cheng lu juan shang" 「柳先生龍城録巻上」, 5. In Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元. *Wu bai jia zhu liu xian sheng ji* 『五百家註柳先生集』 vol. 10 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1934).

awakened in the cold wind of dawn, he found himself beneath a large plum tree. The beautiful woman that he had met was the spirit of the plum blossoms.[14]

The immortal of Luofuxian does not appear in any of the collections of orthodox Daoist hagiographies such as *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*,[15] but nevertheless, the story of Luofuxian came to be a revered motif of artists ranging from the late Qing painter Su Liupeng 苏六朋(1791 – ca. 1862) to the nihonga pioneers Yokoyama Taikan 横山大観 (1868-1956) and Hishida Shunsô 菱田春草 (1874-1911).[16] The theme's popularity seems to have been largely due to Matabei's work, in which the artist presents Luofu Xian as if she truly were a member of the Daoist pantheon. Just as Hong Yingming had posed Chisongzi (literally, "Master of the Red Pine") beside the transcendent's namesake tree, a symbol of longevity (Figure 102), in much the same way, Matabei depicting the immortal of Luofu in three-quarter view standing in front of a blossoming prunus, another of the "three friends of winter" symbolizing long life.

Another aspect of Luofu Xian's reinvention by Matabei is her apparent identity as a member of the royal court. Her appearance, particularly that of her head, is almost identical to that of Lady Nongyu: her hair, parted in the center, is partly tied up in a bun, and the remainder hangs down to slightly below her shoulders. At the crown of her head and at her nape, her hair is decorated with gorgeous, golden ornaments. Her eyebrows are carefully plucked into thin arches as well. (Figures 105-106.) In light of the

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[14] Iwasa, 128.

[15] Jo-shui Chen, *Liu Tsung-yüan and Intellectual Change in T'ang China, 773-819* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 103.

[16] Su Liupeng's work is in the collection of the Guangzhou Museum of Art, Taikan's portrait is in the Adachi Museum of Art in Shimane Prefecture, and Shunsô's, dated 1901, is in the Nagano Prefectural Shinano Art Museum.

customary depiction of immortals such as Li Tieguai as destitute outcasts in tattered clothes, this transformation of Luofu Xian is particularly conspicuous.

Though Matabei was employed by relatives of the shogun from 1637, at which time he was approximately 59 years old, until the end of his life,[17] at least two of these three paintings are believed to have been produced before then. The relatively subdued coloration of all three of these works as well as what Tsuji Nobuo has described as the comically vulgar appearance of the figures they depict are further reasons to assume that they were not commissioned by high-ranking members of the government.[18] While the homage that Matabei's works pay to rulers and particularly members of the noble class liken them to the aforementioned Daoist paintings by the Kanô school, the way in which he subtly yet consistently distorts the figures completely subverts the ideological function that the works may otherwise have possessed. Underlying the apparent glorification of Matabei's subjects is an acknowledgement of the grotesque physicality of all individuals, be they mortal or transcendent.

Kanô Sansetsu: Immortalism and Social Detachment

As with the Daoist portraits by Matabei, Kanô Sansetsu's depictions of transcendents, particularly members of the Eight Eccentrics,[19] display not only the influence of *Strange*

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[17] Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 26-27.
[18] Ibid, 30-31.
[19] The evolution and irregularities of the term "the Eight Immortals" (八仙; Ch: *baxian*; Jpn: *hassen*) demand acknowledgement, as Anning Jing explains: "Among the several extant versions of the junior group of Eight Immortals in literature, drama, and the visual arts, the earliest dates to the early Yuan. The individuals in the different versions vary. Some appear in all versions, [and these 'regulars' include Zhongli Quan 鍾離權, Lu Dongbin 呂洞賓, Li Tieguai 李鐵拐, Han Xiangzi 韓湘子, and Lan Caihe 藍采

Traces of Immortals and Buddhas but a great deal of personal reinterpretation as well, and as a result, some are challenging to identify, but upon doing so, one can easily appreciate the way in which these portraits reflect particular aspects of the artist's personality. Sansetsu's images of Li Tieguai 李鉄拐 (Jpn: Tekkai 鉄拐) and Liu Haichan 劉海蟾 (Jpn: Ryûkaisen; also known in Japanese as Gama 蝦蟇), though intended as a diptych, display two, dramatically different degrees of fidelity to visual sources. Since the main attribute of Li Tieguai (Figure 107), his cane, is a quite commonplace object and therefore perhaps insufficient by itself to inform viewers of the character's identity, Sansetsu reverently adheres to several aspects of Hong's depiction. (Figure 108.) The strangely contorted tree in the background has been preserved and now borders the opposite edge of the image, and Li's head, though redrawn with less hair and facing in the opposite direction, is identical. Though Sansetsu has readjusted the position of the figure's arms and re-imagined his attire, the angle of Li's torso and the position of his bare left foot have likewise remained unchanged. By contrast, since Liu Haichan (Figure 109) is easily identified by his unusual attribute, a toad, Sansetsu has disregarded portraits of him by earlier artists (Figure 110) and instead utilizes his own, distinctive

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和]; others are present in only some versions, [and these 'irregulars' include Cao Guoqiu 曹国舅, Zhang Guolao 張果老, He Xiangu 何仙姑, Helan Xian, Xuan Huzi, Hsu Shenweng, and Zhang Silang]. The total number of individuals is twelve, but [when shown as a group]… only eight figures from [this] larger pool of candidates were selected at one time." Hearn, Maxwell K. and Judith K. Smith, ed.. *Arts of the Sung and Yüan: Papers Prepared for an International Symposium Organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Conjunction with the Exhibition Splendors of Imperial China: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York: Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996): 215. In visual depictions of the Eight Immortals, the appearance of any of the final four immortals in Jing's list seems to be relatively rare.

visual vocabulary, giving the character an expression of demented ecstasy and filling the upper half of the scroll with jagged rocks.

In *Screens with Paintings of Chinese Immortals*, Sansetsu portrays four other members of the Eight Eccentrics. The task of identifying these characters, however, is far more challenging, because some of these individuals possess several interchangeable attributes, and also because the artist has either taken immense creative liberty with these portraits, as he did with that of Liu Haichan, or has consulted other visual sources. Some of the artist's alterations to the iconography of the figures are relatively minor. Han Xiangzi 韓湘子(Jpn: Kanshôshi), for example, appears playing a small traverse flute (笛子, Ch: *dizi*) instead of the fish-drum (魚鼓, Ch: *yugu*) that he is shown holding in Hong's depiction.[20] (Figures 111-112.) Similarly, in Sansetsu's image of Cao Guoqiu 曹国舅 (Jpn: Sô Kokkyû), the transcendent stands holding a set of clappers 雲陽板(Ch: *yun yang ban*), while in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, he is shown with a fly whisk and studying a *taiji* 太極 diagram; the only common characteristic linking these two images is the willow tree beneath the drooping branches of which the figure poses.[21] (Figures 113-114.)

Since all of the figures portrayed in this pair of folding screens by Sansetsu are most likely limited to members of the Eight Immortals, the remaining two portraits should, at least by process of elimination, be relatively easy to identify. Nevertheless, the artist's omission or alteration of crucial iconographic features has made this task

[20] Little, Stephen. *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; Berkeley: In association with University of California Press, 2000), 321.
[21] Ibid, 321.

surprisingly difficult. Regarding the image of a man crouching beside a basket of flowers (Figure 115), since an image of Han Xiangzi, who is known for his abilities to make flowers bloom instantly,[22] has already been included in these folding screens, is most likely not another portrait of this immortal. Instead, it was probably intended to depict Lan Caihe 藍采和(Jpn: Ransaiwa) who was known for carrying a basket of flowers,[23] as he is shown doing in an illustration from the encyclopedia *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms* (*Sancai Tuhui* 三才図会) compiled in 1607 by Wang Qi and Wang Siyi. (Figure 116.) As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, several of the illustrations in this encyclopedia were copied from *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, and though Hong's depiction of Lan Caihe shows him holding a set of castanets 拍板 (Ch: *paiban*; Jpn: *hakuban*)[24] and a string of coins,[25] (Figure 117) this is unmistakably the origin of the Wangs' illustration. Unfortunately, Sansetsu shows the transcendent with both feet bare although, as seen in the Hong and Wang illustrations, Lan Caihe was known for wearing a boot on one of his feet.[26]

Sansetsu's image of the mustachioed immortal standing upon a pier and leaning what appears to be a long bamboo pole against his left shoulder (Figure 118) displays the extent to which the artist's conception of the Eight Eccentrics diverged from accepted iconography. The same figure (Figure 119) also appears in "Immortals," Sansetsu's set of polychromatic *fusuma* paintings, alongside eight other characters who can be readily

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[22] Hearn, 218.
[23] Lai, T. C.. *The Eight Immortals* (Hong Kong: Swindon Book Company, 1972), 5.
[24] Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 321.
[25] Lai, 7.
[26] Ibid, 5.

identified as Liu Haichan, Lan Caihe, Li Tieguai, Han Xiangzi, Zhongli Quan, Zhang Guolao, Lü Dongbin, and Cao Guoqiu. If this remaining figure is indeed a well-known transcendent, then considering both Anning Jing's observation about alternate members of this group as well as the iconography of these members, Sansetsu's figure may well be a male incarnation of He Xiangu 何仙姑 (Jpn: Kasenko). Though this sole female member of the Eight Immortals is depicted in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* with some peaches and a basket of *lingzhi* (Ganoderma lucidum), a fungus that was believed to offer immortality to anyone who ate it (Figure 120),[27] a modified copy of this illustration found in *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms* shows her holding another of her attributes, a lotus plant, from its root.[28] (Figure 121.) The similarity of these figures' poses further infers that Sansetsu may have consulted one or both of these texts when painting his portraits: the immortal is shown with his or her body pointing slightly to the viewer's right, his or her head turned ninety degrees in the opposite direction, and his or her back arched. Even common elements in the attire of the figures, such as the shape of their collars and the seams running down the center of their chests, are difficult to ignore.

In Sansetsu's portraits of Daoist transcendents one can possibly detect what Tsuji Nobuo has described as a distain for social interaction.[29] Despite the fact that they are known as members of the Eight Immortals, each of the figures is presented individually within his or her own unique environment. Although the compositional decision for

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[27] Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, 321.
[28] Ibid, 321.
[29] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 50-51.

these portraits was certainly dictated by visual sources such as Hong's illustrations, even in a painting in which the immortals are shown gathered together, the characters seem oblivious to one another's existence, and even their clothes seem to be affected in dissimilar ways by the blowing wind.[30] (Figure 122.) While Tsuji is compelled to interpret these characteristics from a psychoanalytical standpoint, in the context of religious Daoism, a willingness to escape from the spiritually unhealthy influence of society and to behave as if alone even among the presence of others is considered a laudable virtue. If a full appreciation of the artist's work depends upon an understanding of his personality, then considering that the artist himself lived before the development of modern science, the most appropriate lens through which to evaluate him seems to be the belief system in which he was known to express personal interest.

Itô Jakuchû: Abstract Contemplation of Immortalism

Within Jakuchû's oeuvre, the set of works whose Daoist meaning is most obvious is a pair of hanging scrolls in which the immortals Liu Haichan (Jpn: Gama) and Li Tieguai (Jpn: Tekkai) are presented as whimsical caricatures that teeter upon the verge of abstraction. (Figures 123-124.) In the right scroll, a three-legged frog dances upon the balding head of Liu Haichan, who stands holding a peach with his back turned to the viewer. The opposing scroll offers a frontal portrait of Tieguai, who clutches his staff in both hands, leans his head back, and blows a gust of air towards the sky, thereby expelling his own spirit, which is represented by a small, flying figure. The artist invited

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[30] Doi Tsugiyoshi, ed.. *Kanô Sanraku / Sansetsu* 『狩野山楽・山雪』 (Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1976), 189.

two acquaintances, the Shingon priest Sessan Jakushô and the Ôbaku priest Gessen Jôtan (d. 1769), to write the inscriptions on the scrolls. In the left scroll, Jôtan subtly refers to Tieguai and ponders the irony of how his pathetic physique belies his true identity as a powerful immortal:

> *Having lost his body, he was forced to inhabit the corpse of one who had died of starvation. This was not his original body, of course. [But] how could people be aware of this?*[31]

In the right scroll, which depicts Haichan, Sennan Jakushô also discusses Tieguai but offers a strikingly different image of the transcendent, describing his supernatural ability as a metaphor for the solitary meditation upon which all Daoist practitioners base their spiritual training:

> *His flesh exposed to the elements for many long years, he has entered the worlds of inaction and quietude. Blowing his spirit out into space, his days are spent pleasantly in diversions in the immortal realm where no one grows old.*[32]

In contrast to many of the other Japanese eccentric artists, a great deal of information about how Jakuchû may have developed an interest in religious Daoism has risen to public attention in recent years. One important influence upon the artist seems to have been his relationship with Baisaô 売茶翁 (1675-1763), a well-known Buddhist priest of the Ôbaku sect and a literatus of the Edo era. Baisaô's own name derived from his business as a tea merchant and proprietor of the tea store "Pathway to the Immortals"

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[31] Hickman, Money L. and Yasuhiro Satô. *The Paintings of Jakuchû*. (New York: Asia Society Galleries in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 148. Translation by Money L. Hickman.
[32] Ibid, 148. Translation by Money L. Hickman.

(Tsûsentei 通仙亭).[33] He was furthermore one of the eccentrics profiled in *Kinsei kijin-den*, in which Kôkei offered samples of the priest's poetry, much of which alludes to the Daoist pantheon:

> *Everyday, the water boils, and I hear the kettle whistle.*
> *At that point, I understand the pleasure of immortals.*
> *If you want to learn the pleasure of tea as well,*
> *First drink this cup of tea with earnestness.*[34]

One example of the extent to which Jakuchû admired and emulated this figure can be found in records about Baisaô's visit to Jakuchû's studio at the end of the year 1760, when the *Dôshoku sae* series was still in the process of being completed. Baisaô later expressed his admiration of Jakuchû's work in a seven-character poem, and the artist felt so honored to receive this praise that he carved the poem into a seal and used that seal on several paintings.[35] Jakuchû also paid tribute to the priest in several posthumous portraits that he painted decades later. (Figure 125.)

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[33] Itô Jakuchû 伊藤若冲. *Jakuchû: Tokubetsu Tenrankai Botsugo 200-nen: Bunkazai Hogohô 50-nen Kinen Jigyô = Jakuchû!* 『若冲：特別展覧会没後 200 年：文化財保護法 50 年記念事業 = Jakuchû!』 (Kyoto: Kyoto kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2000), 24.

[34] 煎茶日々起松風　醒覚人間仙路通　要識盧仝真妙旨　傾嚢先入箇銭筒. Murakami Mamoru 村上護. *Ban Kôkei sen autosaidâ 119-nin kinsei kijinden* 『伴蒿蹊撰アウトサイダー119 人近世畸人伝』. Tokyo: Hanbai kyôikusha Shuppan Sâbisu, 1981), 188. Several other poems by Baisaô referring to immortals are translated into English in Waddell, Norman. "The Old Tea Seller: The Life and Poetry of Baisaô." In *The Eastern Buddhist* 17 (Autumn 1984) 2: 93-123.

[35] Itô, 31. The original poem is: 丹青活手妙通神.

Baisaô is believed to have encouraged this artist, commonly known throughout his early life as Masuya Gensaeimon, to chose the artist name Jakuchû, a word that resonates with Daoist significance. Meaning "like a void," the name originates from a list of paradoxes found in the forty-fifth chapter of the *Dao De Jing* 道德經:

> *Great success seems to be lacking, but it will never run out.*
> *Great fullness seems to be like a void, but its usage is limitless.*
> *Great straightness seems bent, great skill seems clumsy, and great eloquence sounds awkward.*[36]

The belief that Masuya Gensaeimon began to use the name Jakuchû around 1747 is based upon the evidence of a water ladle (*mizusashi*) that Baisaô owned throughout the latter half of his life and used when conducting tea ceremonies. On the inside of the ladle is written a poem that quotes the phrase, "*Things that lack nothing seem to be like a void.*"[37] The inscription beneath it reads, "On a summer day in the fourth year of the Enkyô era (1747), Tôko Sanjin wrote this poem on this water ladle while at the riverside near the Tadasu forest."[38]

Tôko Sanjin 東湖山人 was a pseudonym for Daiten Kenjô 大典顕常 (1717-1801), the chief abbot of Shôkokuji temple as well as an accomplished poet and a close friend of the painter. In comparison to Baisaô, Daiten was undeniably a far greater

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[36] 大成若缺，其用不弊。大盈若冲，其用不穷。大直若屈，大巧若拙，大弁若訥。The Japanese reading for this is: 大成は欠けたるが若きも、其の用は敝きず。大盈は沖しきが若きも、其の用は窮まらず。大直は屈するが如く、大巧は拙なるが如く、大弁はなるが如し。Ibid, 11. The latter character in Jakuchû's name, 冲, is the common form of the character 冲 (void) that is found in this quote. Ibid, 12.

[37] Ibid, 23, 26-27. 去濁抱清　縦其灑落　大盈若冲　君子所酌 Consistent with his theory is the fact that the earliest known work by the artist that bears the name of Jakuchû is the 1752 painting "White Chicken among Pine Trees" ("Shôjuban Keizu"). Ibid, 23.

[38] Ibid, 27. 丁卯之夏日東湖山人題于糺林水涯.

influence on Jakuchû's artistic production and the development of ideas underlying his works. He first met the artist around 1750,[39] and soon thereafter he became what some historians have referred to as Jakuchû's "spiritual patron,"[40] helping the artist to explore in his works spiritual meanings based upon both Buddhism and Daoism.

Having learned poetry from Daichô Genkô, the spiritual disciple of Baisaô, Daiten soon began to compose works that dealt with the themes of immortality and eremitism.[41] One such work, dated to 1760, approximately one decade after the abbot had first met Jakuchû, offers a montage of imagery that conveys both the melancholy and inevitability of his self-isolation:

I did not decide to become a hermit.
From the beginning, my spirit was removed from worldly society.
An abandoned gate closed all day long
Only the resonance of a settled chime disappears into the forest.
In the window, the summer rain falls.
Beside a thicket of vividly green bamboo, the garden is dark.
While I am sheltered by a home,
The lack of visitors becomes increasingly clear.[42]

In contrast to this somber work, another, undated poem by Daiten discusses a similarly isolated setting but emphasizes instead the wonders that a life of meditation in such an environment can produce:

The forested mountains, stretching for forty kilometers,
Are entirely filled with blooming flowers.
This place is truly another world
Far from the grime of corrupt society.

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[39] Ibid, 27.
[40] Ibid, 24.
[41] Ibid, 24.
[42] Sueki Fumihiko 末木文美士. *Sômon : Dokuan Genkô, Baisa-ô, Daichô Genkô, Daiten Kenjô* 『僧門 : 独菴玄光, 売茶翁, 大潮元皓, 大典顕常』(Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 249-50. 不是牆東隠　由来世外心　閒門関永日　清磬響空林　窓湿黄梅雨　庭昏緑竹陰　四隣人境近　愈見絶招尋.

Who is this lone, thousand-year-old immortal
By means of whose energy the mist-like flowers
On the countless branches blowing in the spring wind
Have opened?[43]

Many of Jakuchû's works echo Baisaô's and Daiten's enthusiasm about eremitism and immortalism, but they do so in an abstract, indirect way that often escapes the attention of viewers. As Daiten explained in *Jakuchû Koji Shunzô Ketsumei* 若冲居士寿蔵碣銘, in his attempt to produce grand works rivaling those of the Song and Yuan dynasties, the artist could not afford to bother with portraits of imaginary transcendents.[44] Beyond this rationalization, Jakuchû may have merely followed the example of Baisaô and Daiten, both of whom wrote poems that offer nothing more than mere glimpses of anonymous Daoist characters. Through his many bird paintings, the painter made similar allusions to immortalism. The cranes that Jakuchû depicted throughout his career (Figure 126) bring to mind the mounts of transcendents such as Wangzi Qiao (Jpn: Ôshikyô). Other bird paintings seem to be subtle metaphors for eremitism. In *The Lineage of Eccentricity*, Tsuji Nobuo pondered the possible reasons why Jakuchû often depicted birds within a dense curtain of foliage riddled with holes that disorients the viewer and effectively camouflages the birds.[45] (Figure 127.) A satisfactory understanding of these paintings does not necessarily require, as the author implies, "the tool of psychoanalysis" but rather an awareness of the extent to which the artist, like his spiritual patron, pursued the lifestyle of a Daoist hermit.

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[43] Ibid, 274. 十里林巒尽放花　偏知絶境与塵賒　誰将千載真人気　結作春風万朶霞.
[44] Itô, 20.
[45] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 70-71.

Soga Shôhaku: The Visual Spectacle of Immortalism

As much as one-fifth of Soga Shôhaku's known oeuvre consists of images based upon Daoist themes, and of these works, "Immortals," the pair of folding screens painted by Shôhaku in 1764, is undoubtedly the most famous. Of even greater art historical importance than a determination of the visual sources for the figures in this painting, a topic discussed at length in Chapter Two, is an accurate identification of those figures. In the following iconographic analysis, the right screen (Figure 128) will be addressed first, but since the figure whose identification presents the most challenge appears at the right edge of this screen, the characters here will be discussed from left to right, contrary to the order in which they would normally be viewed.

Several scholars have recognized the robed man riding upon a dragon (Figure 129) to be Lu Dongbin 呂洞賓 (Jpn: Ryodôhin), the leader of the Eight Immortals who is frequently depicted subduing a mythical beast (Figure 130),[46] but in fact the identity of this figure is not quite so simple. The image is a *mitate* (parody) that makes subtle reference to the aforementioned tale of Zhang Liang (Jpn: Chôryô) that Iwasa Matabei depicted in his undated "Scrolls of Legendary Chinese and Japanese Figures." (Figure 131) As stated in Chapter Two, the heads of the dragons and the pose of their riders are almost identical. Equally noticeable in both images are the fanciful representations of the

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[46] Ibid, 82; Tanaka Yûko 田中優子. *Edo no sôzôryoku* 『江戸の想像力』 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1992), 166.

waves surrounding the dragons and indicating the creatures' sudden movement through the water.

The figure standing on the nearby shore and hailing Lu/Zhang (Figure 132) holds a cane in his left hand and has for this reason been labeled by some scholars as Li Tieguai (Jpn: Tekkai).[47] He also participates in the *mitate*, however, playing the role of Huang Shigong (Jpn: Kôsekikô). Shôhaku's attempt to conflate Li and Huang is ironic, since Li, as a bedraggled hermit, owns no shoes that he could possibly lose, so instead Lu/Zhang is shown returning a bowl (Figure 129), probably one that Li uses for begging.

Because of the presence of the bird next to him, the regally dressed figure standing to the left of Li/Huang has been identified by scholars as Wangzi Qiao (Jpn: Ôshikyô; Figures 133-134).[48] While he is in fact a prince and plays a set of pan pipes similar to those of Wangzi, the bird's splayed plumage, particularly the feathers on the top of its head, indicates that it is not a stork but rather a phoenix. Accordingly, the transcendent must be Xiaoshi 蕭史 (Jpn: Shôshi). Shôhaku had painted a portrait of Xiaoshi five years earlier (Figure 135), several aspects of which, including the figure's black beard and headdress, are identical.

In light of the complete absence of information about Shôhaku's own appearance, Tsuji's statement that the figure on the far right side of this screen (Figure 136) is perhaps a self-portrait of the artist is difficult to judge.[49] Since Shôhaku was known to have used *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* as a source for his portraits of transcendents,

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[47] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 82; Tanaka, 166.
[48] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 82; Tanaka, 166.
[49] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 82.

and since all but one of the other characters represented in this pair of folding screens can be found in the volume of this text entitled "Traces of Hermits" 消遥墟 (Ch: *Xiaoyaoxu*, Jpn: *Shôyôkyo*), the identity of this figure can be reasonably limited to the sixty-three hagiographies from that volume.

Tsuji and other scholars have considered the possibility that the figure may be the transcendent Mayizi 麻衣子(Jpn: Maiko; Figure 137),[50] but upon the basis of purely superficial appearance, the two have little in common other than their clothing and the medicine gourds they carry at their waists. An immortal who was known to be accompanied by a tiger would certainly be a far more fitting match. Although hermits accompanied by tigers are well known in both Buddhist and Korean Daoist legendry (the Tang dynasty monk Fenggan 豊干 and the *sanshin*, respectively), they are far less common in the context of Chinese Daoism. Among the illustrations in "Traces of Hermits," only that of Xuanyuan Ji 軒轅集 (Jpn: Ken'enshû; Figure 138) includes a tiger. The corresponding text may not specify that the immortal was accompanied by this precise animal, but nevertheless various details are nevertheless consistent with Shôhaku's illustration:

> *According to legend, [Xuanyuan Ji] is several hundred years old, but his face has not aged. While sitting in a dark room, his sharp eyes can see at a distance of several meters. He always gets medicine from rocky valleys. For this reason, terrible creatures (lit., "a poisonous dragon") and brave, powerful beasts obey him so dutifully that he has them protect him.*[51]

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[50] Ibid, 82.

[51] Hong, vol. 1, 214. 「相伝数百歳顔色不老坐暗室目光長数丈毎採薬於岩谷則毒龍猛獣隋之至為衛護」.

In particular, this passage clarifies the reason why the transcendent in Shôhaku's painting stands gazing off into the distance with his brow furrowed and his left hand shielding the sun from his eyes. In this way, Shôhaku is emphasizing the individual's extraordinary visual acuity.

In the left screen (Figure 139), since again the most enigmatic figure appears on the far right, the characters will be discussed from left to right. The woman leaning against a boulder and accompanied by two younger attendants, one of whom is holding a platter of peaches (Figure 140) is unmistakably Xiwangmu 西王母 (Jpn: Seiôbô), the Queen Mother of the West, with her daughters. (Figure 141.) Tsuji has proposed that the pangolin that stands next to the immortal and prepares to bite into one of her peaches represents Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (Jpn: Tôbôsaku; Figures 142-143).[52] Although this character is indeed infamous for his guile and self-centeredness, he is not associated with creatures such as the pangolin in any known texts, nor is he known to be able to metamorphose into other animals. For this reason, the creature depicted here should probably be interpreted as merely a zoological oddity whose presence in the painting adds to its air of otherworldliness.

There is little doubt that the figure whose ears are being cleaned by one of Xiwangmu's daughters (Figure 144) is Liu Haichan 劉 海 蟾 (Jpn: Gama 蝦蟇) even though, in terms of its size, the creature that Shôhaku shows clinging to his shoulders looks more like a dog or small bear than a frog. Crouching to the right of him is a far

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[52] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 81.

more obscure immortal, Zuoci 左 慈 (Jpn: Saji; Figures 145-146), in the process or reenacting one of the pivotal scenes of his hagiography, an event that occurred during his employment at the court of Lord Cao Cao 曹操(Jpn: Sôsô; 155-220 CE):

> *One year, Lord Cao Cao invited many visitors and hosted an enormous party. At that time, he spared no expense in ordering all sorts of delicacies, but since ultimately the only one that he could not acquire was sea bass from Songjiang* 松江 *Province, he was disappointed. Thereupon, Zuoci, who was beside him, immediately filled a bronze washtub with water, dropped a fishing line into it, and before long, he had caught a sea bass.*[53]

The figures on the far right of this screen (Figure 147) have been described by Tsuji as a bearded version of the Buddhist demoness Kishi Mojin (Sanskrit: Hârītî) surrounded by her demon children.[54] Considering the frequency in which imagery and concepts originating from either Buddhism or Daoism has been translated into the context of the other religion, the existence of a Daoist version of Kishi Mojin is not impossible. Without a visual precedent for this reinterpretation of the Buddhist character, however, Tsuji's claim is difficult to substantiate.

The two cranes standing to the left of this group provide a clue to the identity of the figures. In a pair of folding screens painted four years earlier, Shôhaku depicted a pair of cranes in extremely similar poses (Figure 148), and in the opposite screen can be found the hermit Lin Hejing 林和靖 (Jpn: Rin Nasei; 967 – 1028 CE), known also as Lin Bu 林逋 (Jpn: Rin Po), accompanied by two young pages. (Figure 149.) As a solitary recluse, Lin was said to have enjoyed the company of plum trees and the two cranes that

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[53] Hong, vol. 1, 136, as cited in Shôji Tatsusaburo 東海林辰三郎. *Shina Sennin Retsuden* 『支那仙人列傳』 (Tokyo: Juseidô, 1911), 168.
[54] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 82.

he had managed to domesticate as if they were his own wife and children.[55] Considering the Daoist symbolism of these companions, it is not surprising that Lin was commonly known by the nickname of Buxian 逋仙 (Jpn: Hosen), meaning "Fugitive Immortal." Rather than young ogres, as Tsuji has suggested,[56] the figures who are gathered at his right of Lin in the "Immortals" folding screens (Figure 147) are certainly human children, inspired by the image of Lin's pages who appeared in Shôhaku's previous portrait of the recluse (Figure 149) and deformed in much the same way as the characters in "Children at Play," painted in approximately the same year as the "Immortals" folding screens.[57]

While Tsuji has interpreted the garishly yellow body of the crane peeking out from behind Lin (Figure 147) as an example of the artist's expressionistic tendency,[58] this bird is in fact the way in which Shôhaku rationalizes the inclusion of Lin, a mere mortal Daoist practitioner, among these transcendents. The *jintishi* (regulated verse) "Huang he lou" 黄鶴楼 ("Yellow Crane Terrace") by the Tang Dynasty poet Cui Hao (Jpn: Saikô; 704-754 CE) is one of the most well-known references to such a bird:

> *Where long ago a yellow crane bore a sage to heaven,*
> *Nothing is left now but the Yellow Crane Terrace.*
> *The yellow crane never revisited earth,*
> *And white clouds are flying without him forever.*
> *Every tree in Han-yang becomes clear in the water,*
> *And Parrot Island is a nest of sweet grasses;*
> *But I look toward home, and twilight grows dark*

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[55] Little, Stephen. "Dimensions of a Portrait: Du Jin's The poet Lin Bu Walking in the Moonlight." In *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 75 (November 1988) 9: 336.
[56] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 82.
[57] Shôhaku Soga 曾我蕭白. *Burai to Iu Yuetsu: Tokubetsu Tenrankai (Shôhaku Show)* 『無頼という愉悦：特別展覧会 (Shôhaku Show)』 (Kyoto: Kyoto kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2005), 356.
[58] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 82.

With a mist of grief on the river waves.[59]

Through literary references such as this, the image of a yellow crane has come to be a clear signifier for an immortal, and its appearance in Shôhaku's painting encourages the viewer to re-envision Lin himself as a transcendent.

In stark contrast to the socially reticent characters depicted by Kanô Sansetsu, Shôhaku's figures seem to flaunt their unusual abilities and appearances in a vulgar spectacle reminiscent of a vaudeville performance. In this way, Shôhaku, much like Santô Kyôden and other authors of *kibyôshi* novels, utilizes Daoist imagery for the purposes of entertainment, combining a parody of Zhang Liang and Huang Shigong, ridiculous caricatures such as that of Liu Haichan, and alluring *bijin* such as Xiwangmu. Rather than intending to slander the religion, however, the artist seems determined to celebrate its odd, illogical nature and the intriguing sense of mystery that its characters exude.

Nagasawa Rosetsu: In Search of Original Symbols of Immortalism

As a virtuoso of figure painting, Nagasawa Rosetsu would seem to be an ideal artist to portray the Daoist immortals. Indeed, his portrait of Xiwangmu (Jpn: Seiôbô), Queen Mother of the West, leaning against a boulder with one of her daughters standing behind her is a compelling, sensitively painted image. (Figure 150.) The extent to which

[59] Witter Bynner, translator. *The Jade Mountain; a Chinese Anthology, Being Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty, 618-906*. (New York, New York: A.A. Knopf, 1929), 143.「黄鶴楼」昔人已乗黄鶴去 此地空余黄鶴楼　黄鶴一去不復返　白雲千載空悠々　晴川歴々漢陽樹　芳草萋々鸚鵡洲　日暮郷関何処是　煙波江上使人愁.

this image reveals the artist's attitude about Xiwangmu or immortalism in general, however, is rather questionable. Tsuji's main criticism that Rosetsu never sufficiently distanced himself from the influence of his teacher, Maruyama Ôkyô, may be applicable to this painting as well, as a comparison with one of Ôkyô's own depictions of the goddess indicates.[60] (Figure 151.) Nevertheless, since this particular image by Ôkyô was painted four years after Rosetsu's portrait, a conclusive judgment about the extent of Ôkyô's influence upon this work demands further research.

In addition to his manual dexterity, some of Rosetsu's greatest assets as an artist seem to have been his prolific production of images and his willingness to explore unfamiliar themes. Since Ôkyô was not nearly as willing to devote his attention to subjects that strayed from the traditional array of characters such as the Eight Immortals, Rosetsu was occasionally forced to seek out other visual sources or to rely entirely upon his own imagination. "Ju Citong, Child Becomes Immortal" (Figure 152) portrays the titular character, Ju Citong 菊児童 (Jpn: Kikujidô), who was said to have attained immortality by drinking the dew that collected on chrysanthemums.[61] The precise origin of this character has not yet been determined, but the artist was most likely inspired by an image found in Toriyama Sekien's *The Illustrated Night Parade of Demons* (*Hyakki yakô*) 百鬼夜行, which was published in 1776, approximately ten years before Rosetsu's work. (Figure 153) Sekien's inscription on the work unfortunately provides little information about the character other than guessing that he might be male. Ju Citong has

[60] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 117-118.
[61] Nagasawa Rosetsu 長澤蘆雪; Tsuji Nobuo, ed.. *Nagasawa Rosetsu: Botsugo 200-nen Kinen* 『長澤蘆雪：没後 200 年記念』 (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, 2000), 181.

been described by other authors as a servant of King Mu 穆 (reigned 659-621 BCE) of the Zhou Dynasty. One day, the boy was banished for the crime of stepping on the king's pillow and, during the following period of destitution, he attained immortality by drinking the dew that had collected on chrysanthemums. Sekien categorizes Ju Citong in a group he labels *ôkaburo* 大禿 ("great servants") along with Pengzu 彭祖 (Jpn: Hôso), a transcendent born in the Xia dynasty (circa 2205 - circa 1766 BCE) who served the legendary Emperor Yao 尭 (Jpn: Gyô) and who was still alive and active the end of the Shang dynasty (1030 BCE).[62] In Rosetsu's image, the young boy reclines against a rock and eyes a cluster of chrysanthemums on the other side of a narrow stream. The wide expanse of blank silk on the right half of the scroll helps to not only create a tranquil mood but to also focus the viewer's attention upon Ju's impending decision to drink the dew on the flowers before him.

Perhaps the most evocative Daoist images by Rosetsu are his images of Mount Penglai 蓬莱 (Jpn: Hôrai), legendary home of many of the immortals. (Figure 154.) The artist depicts nothing more than the peaks of the mountain shrouded in clouds, and therefore the mountain seems to float as gracefully as the flock of cranes that approach it. Although the shapes of the trees pay clear homage to Dong Qichang, it has otherwise been hailed as a unique work indicative of the lyrical style Rosetsu adopted towards the

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[62] Toriyama Sekien 鳥山石燕. *Toriyama Sekien Gazu Hyakki Yagyô* 『鳥山石燕画図百鬼夜行』 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankokai, 1992), 167.

end of his life.[63] With landscapes such as this, the artist seems to have finally escaped the influence of his teacher and displayed his inherent ability as a painter.

Utagawa Kuniyoshi: Immortalism and Militaristic Power

In the final decades of the Edo period, Utagawa Kuniyoshi produced among his warrior prints a number of images that made reference to Daoist mythology. Unlike his aforementioned predecessors, however, Kuniyoshi responded to the thrill-seeking tastes of his middle-class patrons by transforming the immortals he portrayed into grotesque, intimidating beings. The transcendent who seemed to be the most easy to transform in this way was Liu Haichan (Jpn: Gama). Beyond the appearance of this character's frog familiar, the single-sheet portrait of him that Kuniyoshi produced in 1836 (Figure 155) bears no resemblance at all to depictions by earlier artists. Here, the transcendent appears as a crimson humanoid whose entire body is a rippling mass of muscle, sinew, and bone. Rather than a single, discrete toad at his side, as Hong Yingming presented, this incarnation of the immortal is surrounded by frogs, some of monstrous size, such as the one upon which he sits, and others that are only slightly larger than normal, such as those at his feet.

The warm response that Kuniyoshi's portrait of Liu Haichan received is evident in a portrait of the same character produced nine years later that exaggerates the transcendent's appearance even further. (Figures 156-157.) The character is now a hunchbacked creature who commands a legion of enormous toads and whose

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[63] Seattle Art Museum. *Song of the Brush: Japanese Paintings from the Sansô Collection* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1979), 174.

supernatural talents include the ability to spew things from his mouth and project them great distances – traits that Hong Yingming would most likely have never imagined. Apparently, the Daoist transcendents were not revered by Kuniyoshi and his audience for their immortality or their decision to live in isolation free from the vulgar passions of society. On the contrary, these figures had become personifications of grotesquerie and, at least in a militaristic sense, passionate feeling. As becomes evident upon reviewing the development of Liu Haichan's image over a period of almost two and a half centuries, however, this transformation was a trend that started long before Kuniyoshi. (Figures 109, 110, 124, 144, and 155.) What this development in the appearance of Daoist characters reveals about how the popular view of religious Daoism in China and Japan changed is a question that lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is difficult to overlook the way in which the emphasis of these Daoist works by eccentric artists gradually shifted from the transcendents' eremitic lifestyle to their unkempt or deformed physical appearances.

Towards a Daoist Definition of Eccentric Art

When describing in general terms the connection between religious Daoism and the genre of eccentric art, it is a gross oversimplification to state that the former was the exclusive subject matter of the latter. Not only were the majority of works produced by each of the seven of the artists discussed in this chapter quite unassociated with Daoism, conversely, the majority of artists who addressed Daoist themes in the Edo period did so in extremely conventional ways and for very worldly purposes. Just as Kanô artists at the

beginning of the seventeenth century painted sumptuous images of transcendents to reiterate the shogunate's authority (Figure 93), likewise in the early nineteenth century, Kuniyoshi's senior Kunisada was producing portraits of *bijin* that referred to "the fragrance of a beautiful, amorous female transcendent" as an advertisement for cosmetics. (Figures 158-159.)

Despite this discordance between eccentric art and Daoism, an understanding of the connection between the two is vital for an understanding of eccentric art. Mental imbalance was an inherent risk undertaken by those who embraced immortalism. The elixirs that Daoist texts as early as Wei Boyang's *The Threefold Unity* (*Cantong ji*; circa 140 CE) recommended to those seeking eternal life often included toxic amounts of cinnabar (mercuric sulphide) that caused certain mental impairment to anyone who managed to survive ingesting it.[64] Perhaps as a reflection of this circumstance, many transcendents, particularly the Eight Immortals, were depicted as drunkards and individualists.[65] Several of the attributes by which the image of Lan Caihe can be identified, such as the boot he purposely wears on only one foot, are expressions of his illogic.[66] The character Helan Xian, one of the infrequent members of the Eight Immortals, was based upon a historical figure whose biography describes him as an eccentric.[67] Even Lin Hejing, the mortal hermit who Soga Shôhaku re-envisioned as a transcendent, was famous for eccentric behaviors, such as his habit of destroying his

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[64] Little, Stephen. *Realm of the Immortals: Daoism in the Arts of China: The Cleveland Museum of Art, February 10-April 10, 1988* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art in Cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1988), 4-6.
[65] Hearn, 218.
[66] Lai, 5.
[67] Hearn, 216.

works of poetry soon after composing them.[68] Not only did these quirks not detract from the degree to which the transcendents were worshipped as religious figures, they were deemed to be sacred evidence of the characters' otherworldly nature. In light of their own exceptional personality traits and art styles, the eccentric artists discussed in this chapter must have found such a celebration of unconventional behavior to be extremely appealing. While living on the fringes of society, they could take comfort in the fact that they were emulating Daoist hermits who abandoned society as well as transcendents living in seclusion on Mount Penglai. For these reasons, the term "eccentric art" that has already been defined in several different ways requires one more interpretation: works of art that allude to religious Daoism and thereby celebrate the sacred nature of heterodoxy, irrationality, and social reclusion.

[68] Little, Stephen. *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 75 (November 1988) 9: 347.

Figure 93. School of Kanô Eitoku, "Chinese Immortals," detail: Flying Liezi (Jpn: Resshi), 1606, set of 16 sliding door panels, color and gold leaf on paper, 198.2 x 182.9 cm each panel, originally installed at Ryôanji Temple, Kyoto. Collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 94. Bada Shanren, Transcription of the "Holy Mother Manuscript" with colophon, detail; 1698, running-standard script, handscroll, ink on paper, 29.4 x 96.0 cm, Collection of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai.

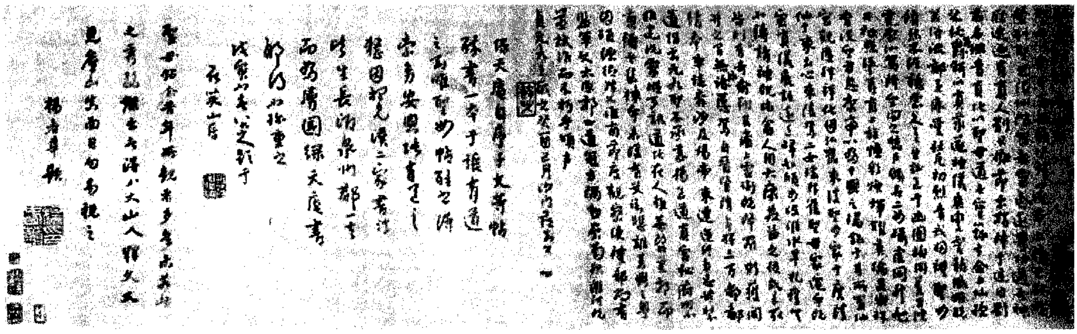

Figure 95. Bada Shanren, Transcription of the "Holy Mother Manuscript" with colophon.

Figure 96. Bada Shanren, Transcription of the "Holy Mother Manuscript" with colophon, detail of seal: *Ke de shenxian* ("Immortality is achievable").

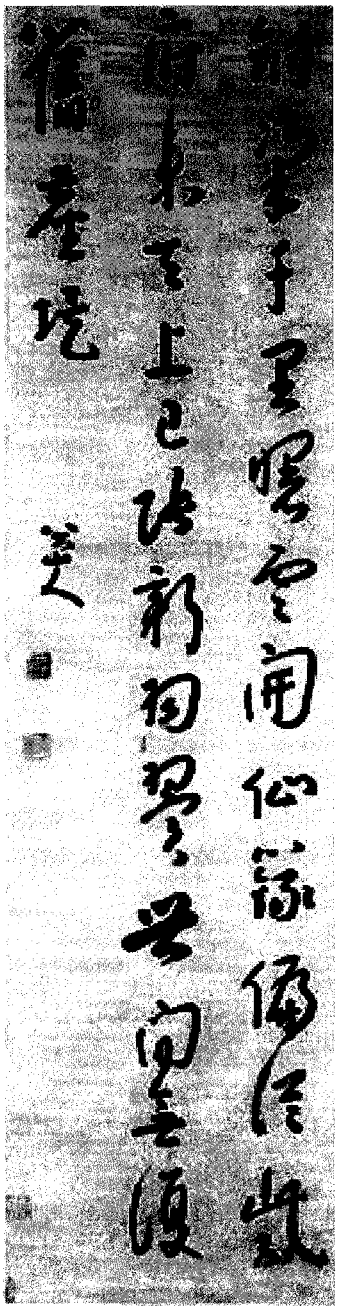

Figure 97. Bada Shanren, *Four Tang Poems*, detail: "Congratulating Pei Tingyu on Passing the Exams in Shu," 1702-03, running-cursive script, ink on paper, set of 4 hanging scrolls, ca. 176.8 x 44.0 cm each, collection of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai.

Figure 98. Iwasa Matabei, "The Transcendent Lady Nongyu," circa 1615-1636, color and ink on paper, hanging scroll, 131.5 x 56.0 cm, collection of Tekisuiken Kinen Bunka Shinkô Zaidan, Chiba prefecture.

Figure 99. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Xiaoshi, husband of Lady Nongyu; 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 100. Iwasa Matabei, "The Transcendent Lady Nongyu," detail: phoenix.

Figure 101. Iwasa Matabei, "Scrolls of Legendary Chinese and Japanese Figures," detail: Zhang Liang returning Huang Shigong his shoe, late 16th century – early 17th century, ink and color on paper, set of 12 hanging scrolls, 36.0 x 59.0 cm each, Fukui Prefectural Art Museum, Fukui, Japan.

Figure 102. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Chisongzi, teacher of Zhang Liang; 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 103. Sesson Shukei, "The Daoist Immortal Lu Dongbin," 16th century, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 118.3 x 59.6 cm, collection of Yamato Bunkakan, Nara, Japan.

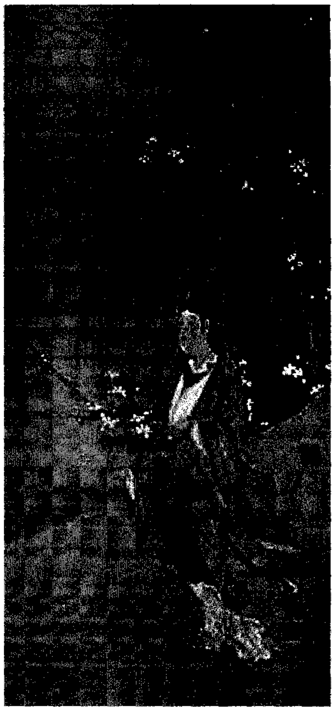

Figure 104. Iwasa Matabei, "Luofu Xian," circa 1615-1636, color and ink on paper, hanging scroll, 131.5 x 54.0 cm, private collection.

Figure 105. Iwasa Matabei, "The Transcendent Lady Nongyu," detail: head.

Figure 106. Iwasa Matabei, "Luofu Xian," detail: head.

Figure 107. Kanô Sansetsu, "The Transcendents Gama and Tekkai," detail: Tekkai; early to mid 17th century, ink and color on silk, pair of hanging scrolls, 173.0 x 88.6 cm each, Sennyû-ji Temple, Kyoto.

Figure 108. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Li Tieguai (Tekkai).

Figure 109. Kanô Sansetsu, "The Transcendents Gama and Tekkai," detail: Gama with his toad perched upon his head.

Figure 110. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Liu Haichan (Gama) sitting beside his toad.

Figure 111. Kanô Sansetsu, *Screens with Paintings of Chinese Immortals*, detail: Han Xiangzi; early 17th century, pair of 2-fold screens, ink and light color/paper, 123.6 x 53.5 cm. each. Collection of Tokyo University of Fine Arts.

Figure 112. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Han Xiangzi.

Figure 113. Kanô Sansetsu, *Screens with Paintings of Chinese Immortals*, detail: Cao Guoqiu.

Figure 114. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Cao Guoqiu.

Figure 115. Kanô Sansetsu, *Screens with Paintings of Chinese Immortals*, detail: Lan Caihe.

Figure 116. Wang Qi and Wang Siyi *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms*, illustration of Lan Caihe; 1607, ink on paper, woodblock print.

Figure 117. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Lan Caihe.

Figure 118. Kanô Sansetsu, *Screens with Paintings of Chinese Immortals*, detail.

Figure 119. Kanô Sansetsu, "Immortals," detail; circa 1647, ink and color on gilded paper, set of sliding doors, 166.7 x 116.0 cm each, Minneapolis Art Museum.

Figure 120. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of He Xiangu, 1602.

Figure 121. Wang Qi and Wang Siyi *Collected Illustrations of the Three Realms* (*Sancai Tuhui*), illustration of He Xiangu, 1607.

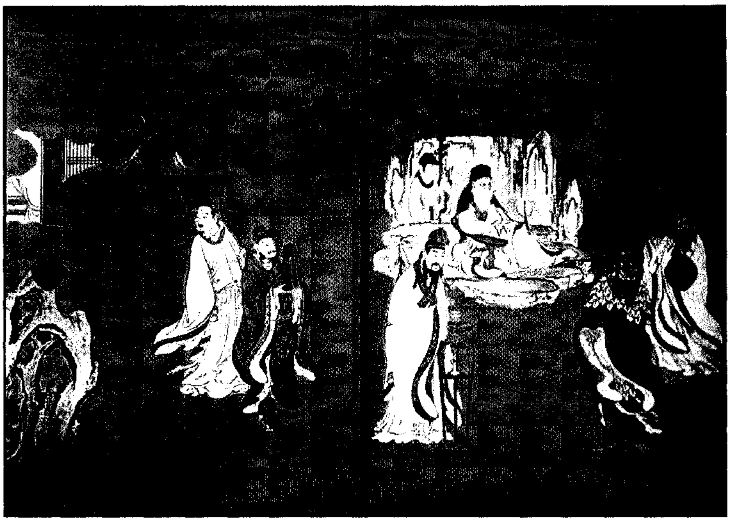

Figure 122. Kanô Sansetsu, "Immortals," detail: left half.

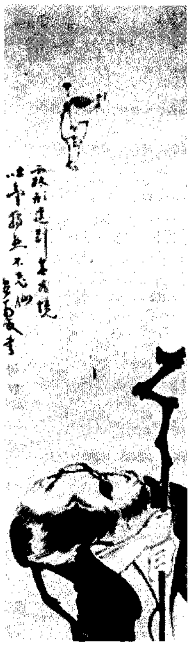

Figure 123. Itô Jakuchû, "The Transcendents Li Tieguai and Liu Haichan," detail: Li Tieguai; 1760-69, ink on paper, pair of hanging scrolls, 102.5 x 29.6 cm each, private collection, Kyoto.

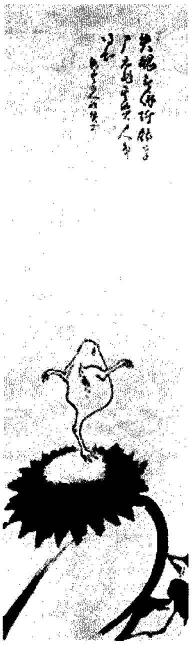

Figure 124. Itô Jakuchû, "The Transcendents Li Tieguai and Liu Haichan," detail: Liu Haichan; 1760-69, ink on paper, pair of hanging scrolls, 102.5 x 29.6 cm each, private collection, Kyoto.

Figure 125. Itô Jakuchû, "Portrait of Baisaô," 1798, ink on paper, 129.3 x 41.4 cm, private collection.

Figure 126. Itô Jakuchû, "Crane," late 1790s, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 108.2 x 36 cm, Gitter-Yelen collection, New Orleans.

Figure 127. Itô Jakuchû, "Golden Pheasants in Snow," from *Dôshoku Sai-e* series, ca. 1761-65, ink and color on paper, Imperial Household Collection.

Figure 128. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: right screen; 1764, color and ink on paper, pair of 6-fold screens, 172.0 x 378.0 cm each, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Tokyo.

Figure 129. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," right screen, detail: Lu Dongbin in parody of Zhang Liang.

Figure 130. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Lu Dongbin; 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 131. Iwasa Matabei, "Scrolls of Legendary Chinese and Japanese Figures," detail: Zhang Liang.

Figure 132. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," right screen, detail: Li Tieguai in parody of Huang Shigong.

Figure 133. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," right screen, detail: Xiaoshi (Shôshi).

Figure 134. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Wangzi Qiao (Jpn: Ôshikyô).

Figure 135. Soga Shôhaku, "Saiweng Raising His Horse and Xiaoshi Playing His Panpipe," detail: Xiaoshi; circa 1759, ink on paper, pair of 6-fold screens, 154.5 x 337.6 cm each, Mie Prefectural Art Museum.

Figure 136. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," right screen, detail: Xuanyuan Ji (Ken'enshû).

Figure 137. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Mayizi.

Figure 138. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Xuanyuan Ji.

Figure 139. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: left screen; 1764, color and ink on paper, pair of 6-fold screens, 172.0 x 378.0 cm each, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Tokyo.

Figure 140. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Xiwangmu and her daughters.

Figure 141. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Xiwangmu and her daughters.

Figure 142. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Dongfang Shuo.

Figure 143. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Dongfang Shuo.

Figure 144. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Liu Haichan.

Figure 145. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Zuoci.

Figure 146. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Zuoci.

Figure 147. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," left screen, detail: Lin Hejing with cranes and children.

Figure 148. Soga Shôhaku, "The Recluse Lin Hejing with Cranes," detail: cranes; 1760, ink and light color on paper, pair of folding screens, 172.0 x 365.0 cm, Mie Prefectural Art Museum.

Figure 149. Soga Shôhaku, "The Recluse Lin Hejing with Cranes," detail: Lin and children.

Figure 150. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Xiwangmu (Seiôbô), Female Sage," 1782, color on paper, hanging scroll, 131.3 x 45.0 cm, private collection.

Figure 151. Maruyama Ôkyô, "Xiwangmu, Dragon, and Tiger," detail: Xiwangmu. 1786, color on silk, set of 3 hanging scrolls, 103.0 x 36.5 cm, private collection.

Figure 152. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Ju Citong (Kikujido), Child Becomes Immortal," before 1786, color on silk, hanging scroll, 46.2 x 65.0 cm, private collection.

Figure 153. Copy of Toriyama Sekien, *The Illustrated Night Parade of Demons* (*Hyakki yakô*), detail: Ju Citong, one of the "Great Servants," ink on paper, original: 1776.

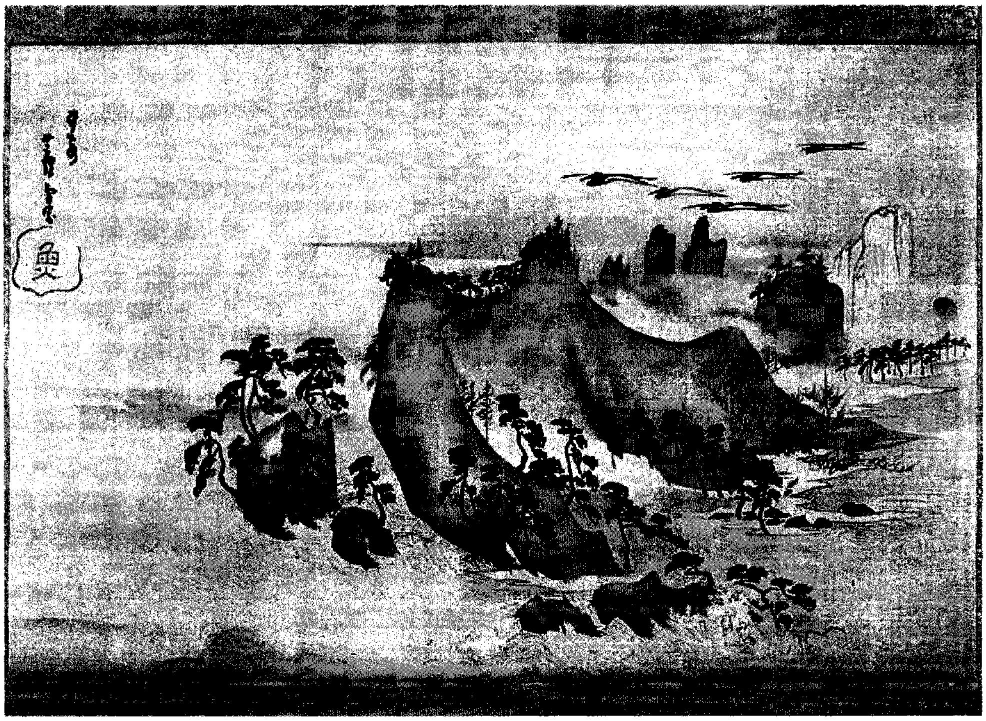

Figure 154. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Mount Hôrai, Island of Immortality," circa 1794, ink and light color on silk, 58.0 x 85.5 cm, Sansô collection.

Figure 155. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Liu Haichan," 1836, ink and color on paper, woodblock print, *ôban* (38 x 25.5 cm), private collection.

Figure 156. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Takiyasha and Her Brother Yoshikado Learning Toad-Magic," circa 1845, ink and color on paper, woodblock print, ôban triptych (38 x 76.5 cm), private collection.

Figure 157. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Takiyasha and Her Brother Yoshikado Learning Toad-Magic," detail: Liu Haichan (Gama).

Figure 158. Utagawa Kunisada, "The Double Mirror of Modern Makeup (Imafû keshô kagami awasekagami)," circa 1818-1830, color on paper, woodblock print, 38.0 cm x 25.8 cm, private collection.

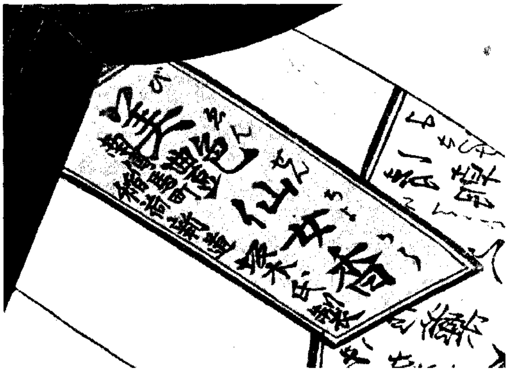

Figure 159. Utagawa Kunisada, "The Double Mirror of Modern Makeup," detail: product advertisement.

Chapter Five:
Hanshan and Shide as Daoist Immortals

Most of the images discussed in the previous chapter are traditionally classified as *dôshaku jinbutsu-ga* 道釈人物画, a term that translates literally as "Daoist-Buddhist figure painting" and that can be more precisely defined as "Daoist and Buddhist images, including portraits of venerable figures who are objects of worship, illustrations of religious teachings and religious tales, and depictions of… Daoist masters and Buddhist patriarchs."[1] Among the possible reasons for the curious juxtaposition of these religions, only one of which ever developed into a publicly recognized social institution within Japan, is the difficulty in assigning to certain works in this genre a purely Daoist or Buddhist meaning. One subject that presents such a typological challenge is the pair Hanshan (寒山; Jpn: Kanzan) and Shide (拾得; Jpn: Jittoku), individuals described alternately as monks, hermits, and poets who are commonly believed to have been active in the early Tang dynasty (618 – 907 C.E.). The interpretation of Hanshan and Shide as Daoist sages, as indicated in various portraits by Chinese artists, offer new insight into the meaning of their depiction by Japanese eccentrics artists and strongly reinforces the Daoist interpretation of Japanese genre of eccentric art.

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[1] Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan 東京国立博物館. *Gendai dôshaku jinbutsu-ga.* 『元代道釈人物画』 (Tokyo: Tokyo kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 1977), 7.

Literary Representations of Hanshan and Shide

The extant biographical information about Hanshan and Shide is surprisingly meager. Other than autobiographical remarks that can be gleaned from Hanshan's poetry itself, the only source of such information is a preface to his collected poems written by Luqiu Yin 閭丘胤, a prefect of Taizhou (modern day Linhai county in Zhejiang province):

> *As for Master Hanshan, we don't know where he came from. He lived on Cold Cliffs in the Tiantai mountains in the county of Tangxing. From time to time he would go back and forth between his retreat and Guoching Temple, wearing birchbark as his hat, dressed in a cotton-fur robe and worn-out shoes. Sometimes he would chant and recite in the long corridors; sometimes he'd whistle and sing through country homes. No one really understood him.*
>
> *When Luqiu Yin was appointed to serve in Danqiu, as he was about to leave he ran into Master Fenggan, who said he had come from Tiantai. Luqiu asked him what worthies fit to be taken as one's teacher this place had, and the Master replied, "There's Hanshan [who's an incarnation of] Manjusri and Shide [who's an incarnation of] Samantabhadra. They tend the fires in the granary kitchen at Guoching Temple."*
>
> *Three days after Luqiu arrived at his official post he went in person to the temple, where he saw the two men, and accordingly politely bowed down. The two men had a good laugh, saying, "Fenggan's a blabbermouth, a blabbermouth! If you don't know Amitabha, what good does it do bowing to us?!" Then they left the temple and went back to Cold Cliffs, where Master Hanshan entered a cave and was gone, the cave closing up on its own.*
>
> *He used to write down poems on bamboo trees and stone walls. Altogether, the poems he wrote on house walls in country homes come to over three hundred* shou. *I have edited them together in one volume.*[2]

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[2] Hendricks, Robert G.. *The Poetry of Han-shan: A Complete, Annotated Translation of Cold Mountain.* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 29. Abridged and translated by Robert G. Hendricks.

In stark contrast to the fanciful, mysterious image conveyed in Luqiu's essay, in which Hanshan, Shide and Fenggan (Jpn: Bukan 豊干) are described as the incarnations of Manjusri Bodhisattva (Jpn: Monju Bosatsu 文殊菩薩), Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (Jpn: Fugen Bosatsu 普賢菩薩) and Amitabha Buddha (Jpn: Amida 阿弥陀), respectively, Hanshan's poems reveal him to be a well-trained scholar who, having failed the civil service examination, abandons his wife and child for a life of eremitism on Cold Mountain. Being well versed in classical literature, he was deeply knowledgeable about not only Buddhism but Confucianism and Daoism as well. Hanshan's personal religious views seem to have been surprisingly eclectic, for within his oeuvre, more than two dozen poems refer to Daoist concepts, and several works directly discuss the theme of immortalism:

My house is placed beneath verdant cliffs;
The weeds in my courtyard I don't cut anymore.
Fresh wisteria hangs down twisting in loops,
Ancient boulders rise up lofty and steep.
Mountain fruits – the monkeys pick;
Fish in the pond – the egrets hold in their bills.
And I with my immortality books, one or two scrolls,
Sit 'neath a tree and read – mumble mumble.[3]

Several of these poems, however, express blatant contempt for what Hanshan considers to be the fallacious promises of religious Daoism, and some editors have arranged the

[3] Ibid, 52. Translation by Robert G. Hendricks.
家住緑巌下　庭蕪更不芟　新藤垂繚繞　古石豎巉巌
山果獼猴摘　池魚白鷺銜　仙書一両巻　樹下読喃喃

poems in an order that presents the author as an enthusiastic novice of Daoism whose faith gradually deteriorates into bitter cynicism.[4]

> *I've often heard of Emperor Wu of the Han,*
> *And as well of the First Emperor of the Qin.*
> *They both took delight in the "immortal" arts,*
> *But they extended their years, in the end, not very long!*
> *Their Golden Terraces – already smashed up and destroyed;*
> *Sandy Mound – subsequently extinguished, wiped out.*
> *Maoling and Liyueh*
> *Today are covered by weeds far and wide.*[5]

In this poem, Hanshan draws upon historical examples to criticize the inefficacy of religious Daoism. While both rulers passionately sought longevity through obscure diets and elixirs, Han Wudi (reigned 141-87 BCE) ultimately died and was buried at Maoling, leaving his Cypress Beam Terrace to fall into ruin. Similarly, Qin Shi Huangdi (reigned 247-210 BCE) died at Sandy Mound, and though the majesty of his tomb at Liyueh can be appreciated now that it has been excavated, during the poet's lifetime, it appeared to be nothing more than a neglected graveyard.[6]

The dramatically wide range of attitudes that Hanshan expresses about religious Daoism has led literary specialists to speculate that his works were in fact written by multiple authors.[7] Edwin G. Pulleyblank (b. 1922) has substantiated this hypothesis with linguistic evidence, separating the poems into two groups. Pulleyblank dates one set,

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[4] Iritani Sensuke 入谷仙介 and Matsumura Takashi 松村昂, et. al. *Kanzanshi* 『寒山詩』 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1970), 491-492.
[5] Hendricks, Robert G.. *The Poetry of Han-shan*, 370. Translation by Robert G. Hendricks.
嘗聞漢武帝　爰及秦始皇　俱好神仙術　延年竟不長
金台既摧折　沙丘遂滅亡　茂陵与驪嶽　今日草茫茫
[6] Ibid, 370.
[7] Ibid, 11.

including the two poems quoted above, to the Sui (581 – 618 C.E.) or early Tang dynasty (618 – 907 C.E.), and he attributes the works to "Hanshan I," [8] who Robert G. Hendricks confidently refers to as the historical figure Hanshan.[9] Pulleyblank believes the remaining poems, a slightly less inspired collection of sermons on Buddhism, to be the creations of "Hanshan II," an individual or group of individuals from the late Tang who sought to emulate Hanshan I and perhaps to elaborate upon his reputation as well.[10] Not surprisingly, details in the preface attributed to Luqiu Yin, particularly the use of the county name Tangxing rather than its former name of Shifeng, dates the text to the mid or late Tang as well.[11] Even Hanshan's and Shide's reputation for mental instability appears to be a later construction: though Hanshan I repeatedly makes reference to the difficulty he encounters when trying to explain his ideas to others, only those poems by Hanshan II mention that people criticize him as irrational or demented.[12]

Visual Depictions of Hanshan and Shide as Immortals

Among the subjects traditionally depicted in the genre of Daoist-Buddhist figure painting, Hanshan and Shide arguably command as distinguished a position as any of those characters discussed in the previous chapter. Some of the earliest portraits of the Tang monks include the late 9th century paintings by Guanxiu described in Chapter One as models of the *yipin* style (Figures 160-162), and without question, the most celebrated

[8] Ibid, 6.
[9] Ibid, 6.
[10] Ibid, 6.
[11] Ibid, 4-5.
[12] Ibid, 8.

depictions of these characters are attributed to Yan Hui 顏輝 (act. late 13th, early 14th cent.; Figures 163-164). As with images of Daoist immortals, a number of attributes are commonly recognized as signifiers of their identity: Hanshan often holds a scroll or brush, while Shide's role as the scullion of Guoching Temple is indicated by his broom. The figures can be further identified by clothes and hairstyles befitting their roles as Tang Dynasty monks, by their gesticulations towards the sky, and by activities such as writing calligraphy on natural objects in the forest or sleeping beside Fanggan and his pet tiger.[13]

As occurred in the field of literature, images of Hanshan as well as his companion Shide transformed the identity of these two characters in extremely ironic ways. Much like the characters discussed in the conclusion of the previous chapter, Hanshan's reputed derangement eventually came to be appreciated as a sign of not only Buddhist enlightenment but also Daoist transcendence. In a set of four scrolls by the painter Liu Jun 劉俊(active 16th century), Hanshan and Shide are shown traversing the same wooded environment as the immortals Li Tieguai and Liu Haichan. (Figures 165-168.) The identity of each figure can be verified by inspecting the attribute he carries: Li supports himself with a crutch under his right arm, Liu Haichan carries a toad on his left shoulder, Hanshan holds out a partly opened scroll, and Shide drags a broom beside him as he walks. (Figures 169-172.)

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[13] A particularly useful survey of Chinese and Japanese images of Hanshan and Shide is Tochigi kenritsu hakubutsukan 栃木県立博物館. *Kanzan Jittoku: egakareta fukyo no soshitachi daishijurokkai kikakuten.* 『寒山拾得―描かれた風狂の祖師たち第 46 回企画展』 Utsunomiya: Tochigi kenritsu hakubutsukan, 1994.

An earlier work by Shang Xi 商喜 (active ca. mid 15th century), "Four Immortals Honoring the God of Longevity" (Figure 173), indicates that the conception of Hanshan and Shide as Daoist immortals and their association with the transcendents Li and Liu was already well established by the 1430s. The figures in the foreground are depicted floating upon a turbulent seascape, and again, the identity of each character can be clearly ascertained via his particular attribute. Shide balances upon his floating broom, Hanshan, while riding on a leaf, carries a scroll in his right hand, Li Tieguai rides on his crutch, and Liu Haichan sits on the back of an enormous toad. (Figures 174-177.) Although paintings in which Li Tieguai and Liu Haichan appear beside Hanshan and Shide have been described by some authors as the re-interpretation of Li and Liu as Buddhist characters,[14] in this work, the presence of several other specifically Daoist iconographic elements, such as the waves upon which the foreground characters ride, the dark robes that they wear, and the distant image of the immortal Shoulao 寿老 riding upon his crane (Figure 178), forcefully imply that, on the contrary, Hanshan and Shide are meant to be viewed as immortals.[15]

Japanese eccentric artists may not have been familiar with the works of Liu Jun and Shang Xi, but evidence presented in Chapter Two indicates that several of them were

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[14] Hearn, Maxwell K. and Judith K. Smith, ed.. *Arts of the Sung and Yüan: Papers Prepared for an International Symposium Organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Conjunction with the Exhibition Splendors of Imperial China: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei.* (New York: Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 219.

[15] Fong, Wen C. and James C.Y. Watt, et. al. *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei.* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1996), 346. See Jing, Anning. "The Eight Immortals: The Transformation of T'ang and Sung Taoist Eccentrics During the Yuan Dynasty," 220-221 in Hearn, Maxwell K. and Judith K. Smith, ed.. *Arts of the Sung and Yüan* for a discussion of the Daoist symbolism in images of figures crossing a body of water.

intimately familiar with Hong Yingming's *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*. Within this text, the volume "The Silent and Brilliant Realm" (「寂光境」, Ch: *Jiguangjing*, Jpn: *Jakkô-kyô*) portrays various Buddhist exemplars, including both Hanshan and Shide. (Figures 179-180.) The contents of their biographies here are extremely similar to, and undoubtedly based upon, the preface to Hanshan's poems that is attributed to Luqiu Yin. Both biographies describe the hermits as reputed incarnations of bodhisattvas, but Hong does not specifically identify which bodhisattvas they were believed to be.[16] A second biographical sketch of Hanshan can be found elsewhere in *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* – in the volume "A Selection of Elders" (「長生詮」, Ch: *Zhangshengquan*, Jpn: *Chôsei-sen*), which discusses the lives of noteworthy Daoist hermits:

Master Hanshan

In the winter, he does not (wake) hungry in the morning
In the summer, he does not (eat) more than his fill in the evening
When he rises early, it is never before the cock crows
When he stays up late, it is never past sunrise (of the following morning)
Within his heart, he is pure, and therefore he maintains the stature of a righteous person
Within his spirit, he is settled, and therefore (moral) impurity leaves his body.[17]

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[16] Hong Yingming 洪應明. *Xianfo qizong* 『仙佛奇蹤』. Vol. 3. 3 volumes. (Kyoto: Kyoto University Library, 2001), 196-201.

[17] Hong Yingming. *Xianfo qizong* 2: 17. 「寒山子」 冬則朝勿饑 夏則夜勿飽 早起不在鷄鳴前 晩起不過日出後 心内澄則眞人守其位 氣内定則邪穢去其身.

References to Hanshan and Shide by Eccentric Artists

Bada Shanren

The popularity of *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas* among Japanese eccentric artists during the Edo period indicates that these artists were likely aware of Hanshan's and Shide's identities not only as Buddhist sages but also as Daoist masters. The many depictions of Hanshan and Shide produced by both Chinese and Japanese eccentrics demand careful consideration since, like the immortals discussed in the previous chapter, they were characters whose absurd behavior and unseemly appearance were expressions of their spiritual transcendence and who therefore reaffirm the aforementioned Daoist definition of eccentricity.

Bada Shanren often alluded to the legend of Hanshan and Shide not though figurative imagery but through the signatures and seals on his paintings. The artist used approximately twenty different names throughout his life,[18] and in the final years of his life, he employed only three, including Bada Shanren and Shide.[19] Bada wrote the latter name as a single compound character (Figures 181-182), and perhaps because of difficulty in reading this idiosyncratic form, historians have disagreed slightly about the proper transcription,[20] but the artist's intention of representing himself as Hanshan's

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[18] Wang Fangyu and Richard M. Barnhart. *Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren, 1626-1705*. Judith G. Smith, ed. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Art Gallery: Yale University Press, 1990), 30.
[19] Wang Fangyu and Richard M. Barnhart. *Master of the Lotus Garden*, 31.
[20] In Pursuit of Heavenly Harmony transcribes the name Shide as 十得. See Chang, Joseph. *In Pursuit of Heavenly Harmony: Paintings and Calligraphy by Bada Shanren from the Estate of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai.* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art: Smithsonian Institution in association with Weatherhill, Inc.,

companion seems quite likely.[21] If so, then Bada's placement of the signature in his landscape paintings, such as along the edge of a precariously steep mountain slope, may have been intended as a witty reference to Shide as a "mountain man" like the painter himself. (Figure 183.)

Due to a relative lack of evidence, the question of whether Bada Shanren viewed Hanshan and Shide as Daoist figures has not yet been adequately answered. Several factors, however, offer encouragement to those scholars who continue to research this issue. Through the use of the hermit's name in his seals, the artist expressed a deep sense of personal identification with Shide, presumably because of the hermit's reputation as a seemingly deranged individual. As evident in historical references he made in his writing and painting, Bada also possessed an impressive awareness about Chinese literature and art history, and may well have been familiar with the works of Liu Jun and Shang Xi. Most importantly, as discussed in the previous chapter, he displayed in his works an intense fascination with religious Daoism.

In the field of Japanese art history, portraits of the two Tang monks by Kanô Sansetsu, Itô Jakuchû, and Soga Shôhaku offer quite compelling evidence that the artists indeed likened Hanshan and Shide to certain Daoist immortals, particularly Li Tieguai and Liu Haichan. Although such evidence, which will be discussed here in detail, is by itself inconclusive, when bolstered by the theory that at least two of these artists were intimately familiar with *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, it strongly suggests

2003), 185. Master of the Lotus Garden, on the other hand, transcribes it as 拾得. See Wang Fangyu and Richard M. Barnhart. *Master of the Lotus Garden*, 34.)

[21] Wang Fangyu and Richard M. Barnhart. *Master of the Lotus Garden*, 32.

that, like Liu Jun and Shang Xi, these artists considered Hanshan and Shide to be Daoist masters.

Kanô Sansetsu

In Kanô Sansetsu's "Hanshan and Shide" (Figure 184), Hanshan is shown holding a partly-opened scroll and looking back over his right shoulder at Shide, who stands behind him and rests a hand on the poet's left shoulder. A large degree of the painting's emotional impact derives from Hanshan's grotesque facial features: the width of his nose is wildly exaggerated, and his mouth, also impossibly broad, is curved into a cartoonish, crescent-shaped grin that is echoed by the shape of his jaw. His drooping eyes and sidelong glance, meanwhile, express intense fear and morose, and the collision of these two expressions results in a disturbing sense of madness. Liu Haichan (Jpn: Gama) in his pair of scrolls "The Transcendents Gama and Tekkai" (Figure 185) wears an identical facial expression, but the face is painted much more tentatively, suggesting that it is probably an earlier work upon which Sansetsu based his portrait of Hanshan.

Itô Jakuchû

A depiction of Hanshan and Shide by Itô Jakuchû created in collaboration with the Ôbaku priest Musen Jôzen (also known as Tangai 丹崖, 1693-1764) reveals a kind of semiotic tension caused by the complex theological identity of the Tang hermits. (Figure 186.) At the top of the scroll, Tangai inscribes a subtle allusion to the legend of Hanshan and Shide that originated with Luqiu Yin's preface to Hanshan's poems:

Beneath the clouds and the trees of a dimly visible cliff
I unroll this sutra and place my trust in it
The moon over Mount Wutai
Pure and white, illuminates Mount Emei in the same way.[22]

From around the fifth century, Mount Wutai 五台 (Jpn: Godai) was a symbol of Mount Qingliang 清涼 (Jpn: Seiryô), the dwelling of Manjusri Bodhisattva (Jpn: Monju Bosatsu), and Mount Emei 峨眉 (Jpn: Gabi) was similarly seen as the sacred home of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (Jpn: Fugen Bosatsu),[23] and thus Tangai focuses upon Hanshan's and Shide's reputation as incarnations of these Buddhist figures.

Jakuchû's deep reverence for Manjusri Bodhisattva and Samantabhadra Bodhisattva is apparent in obsessively detailed, polychromatic portraits of the figures that the artist created approximately two years later (Figures 189-190), and in light of these works, the casual, comical tone with which he depicts Hanshan and Shide, by contrast (Figure 186), indicates that the artist, unlike his collaborator, did not wish to acknowledge them as bodhisattvas. Instead, this image of the two hermits much more closely resembles the portraits of Liu Haichan that Jakuchû painted in approximately the same time period. (Figure 188.) The figures in both works turn their backs towards the viewer and offer little for the viewer to focus upon other than the tufts of matted, black hair on their partly balding heads. Just as Hanshan's and Shide's attributes – Hanshan's

[22] Tadashi Kobayashi, ed. *Japanese Art: The Great European Collections.* Vol. 8. 12 volumes. (Tokyo: Kodansha; New York: Kodansha America, 1994), 240. 雲樹幽崖下 此経信手披 不知五台月 皎潔照峨嵋.
[23] Soothill, William Edward and Lewis Hodous, eds.. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: With Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index.* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), 125, 324.

scroll peeking out from behind the head of the figure on the right and the tip of Shide's broom in the lower right corner - are easily overlooked (Figure 186), so too does Jakuchû's abbreviated description of Liu Haichan's attributes - the peach in his right hand and the three-legged frog dancing upon his head – delay the viewer's recognition of them. (Figure 188.) To the extent that one can assume that the artist maintained fairly consistent attitudes towards the religions he refers to in his paintings, this representation of Hanshan and Shide seems to far more closely reflect Jakuchû's lighthearted interest in the mysteries of religious Daoism than it does his earnest devotion to Buddhism.[24]

Soga Shôhaku

More than those of any other eccentric artist, Shôhaku's images of Hanshan and Shide show clear connections with his portraits of Daoist transcendents. In particular, the faces of Hanshan and Shide show several compelling similarities with the faces of Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai, respectively. Ordinarily, these details might be dismissed as mere conventions of portraiture that Shôhaku occasionally repeated in his paintings. The fact that almost all the figures in his oeuvre that exhibit these facial characteristics are Daoist transcendents, however, leads one to wonder whether the artist had attempted to

[24] Another compelling image of Hanshan and Shide by Itô Jakuchû is his copy of the arhat portraits attributed to Guanxiu (Figures 1-3). See Itô Jakuchû 伊藤若冲. *Jakuchû: tokubetsu tenrankai botsugo 200-nen: bunkazai hogohô 50-nen kinen jigyô = Jakuchû!* 『若冲：特別展覧会没後 200 年：文化財保護法 50 年記念事業 = Jakuchû!』. (Kyoto: Kyoto kokuritsu hakubutsukan, 2000), 250. Since these copies offer little insight into whether Jakuchû saw these characters as Daoist, however, the images will not be discussed here. Although the label of arhat immediately implies that the figures must be regarded as Buddhist, tales of the extraordinary abilities of arhats and the undeniable similarities between, for example, Fu Hu Luohan (Jpn: Fukko Rakan 伏虎羅漢) and Xuanyuan Ji, suggest that, like Hanshan and Shide, these characters display the influence of both Buddhism and religious Daoism.

establish particular physical types with which he could signify the theological meaning of an image without relying upon the traditional attributes of immortals. Perhaps an even more pressing question is whether the fact that his portraits of Hanshan and Shide display these same facial characteristics indicates that Shôhaku considered the Tang hermits to be members of the Daoist pantheon.

The typical facial characteristics that Shôhaku designated for Liu Haichan are evident in the aforementioned "Immortals" folding screens (Figure 191) as well as in "Immortals Tieguai and Xiama" (Figure 192), a work painted roughly a decade later. The transcendent is almost invariably depicted in a frontal portrait with a crescent-shaped smile in which the corners of his mouth are obscured by the clearly delineated, semi-circular base of his protruding cheeks. His cheeks are often shaded so as to appear lit from below, and from beneath their cheeks, three or four parallel lines are consistently added to indicate wrinkles. Within his mouth, a viewer can usually notice a row of neatly aligned, white teeth that protrude slightly below his upper lip and a tongue that curls up and gently touches the front teeth. The image of Hanshan in the pair of scrolls from Kôshôji Temple (Figures 193-194) includes all of these characteristics.

In addition, the shape of Hanshan's right ear and nose are almost identical to those of Liu Haichan as seen in the six-fold "Immortals" screens. (Figure 191.)

The facial characteristics that Shôhaku devised for Li Tieguai are dramatically different than those of Liu Haichan, and thanks to this visual contrast, the viewer is able to quickly distinguish between the two in the many occasions when the artist depicts them together. While Liu Haichan confronts the viewer with a frontal pose, Li is

typically shown in profile facing to the viewer's left. As this character has come to be appreciated as a sort of patron saint of the infirmed, in his portraits, he seems to flaunt his illness accordingly. His body is covered with various, unseemly details that effectively heighten this unhealthy impression. A profusion of hair, for example, protrudes from his nostrils and ears. On his neck, his Adam's apple is dramatically pronounced. Although he is shown in profile, furthermore, the pupil and iris of his visible left eye are painted as perfect circles, creating the unsettling impression that he is either visually impaired or psychologically unstable. While all of these characteristics are noticeable in portraits of Li such as in the six-fold "Immortals" screens (Figure 195) and "The Immortal Tieguai" (Figure 196), they are equally apparent in the image of Shide from the Kôshôji scrolls (Figures 197-198). Other common elements that connect this image of Shide with "The Immortal Tieguai" are his pursed lips, which, since the upper lip is much more distended than the lower, seem to be strangely inverted.

Beside the repetition of certain facial characteristics, Shôhaku's paintings of Hanshan and Shide are visually connected to his portraits of Daoist transcendents through the appearance of certain utilitarian objects as well. Admittedly, the items themselves – a scroll, a gourd, and a straw hat – do not possess exclusively Daoist meaning. When compared to those found in the Shôhaku's depictions of immortals, however, the visual similarities of the items that appear in Shôhaku's portraits of Hanshan and Shide are startling. In light of the fact that these objects never appear in the artist's other works, viewers are compelled to consider these two pictorial themes as closely inter-related.

All of the objects in question can be found in Shôhaku's pair of folding screens that depict the two Tang monks (Figures 199-200).[25] The scroll that sits on a cliff ledge next to seated figure of Hanshan (Figure 201) is a perfectly cylindrical object with a white label adhered to its upper half and wrapped two and a half times with a cord that is anchored on the front of the scroll. The left end of the scroll recedes slightly from the viewer, so the right end of the cylinder appears to be oval, and at the center of this oval, the wooden dowel base of the scroll protrudes slightly. In the scrolls from Kôshôji Temple, a scroll with precisely the same characteristics is shown in Hanshan's right hand (Figure 202). Among the artist's portraits of Daoist masters, this image of a scroll appears again with little alteration in the possession of Laozi (Figure 203) as well as Xuanyuan Ji (Figure 204), bringing to mind the final two lines of the poem by Hanshan quoted earlier:

> *And I with my immortality books, one or two scrolls,*
> *Sit 'neath a tree and read – mumble mumble.*[26]

Although the image of a scroll in Hanshan's possession is a well established attribute that is traditionally interpreted from a Buddhist or secular viewpoint as a sutra or a transcription by Hanshan of his own poetry, respectively, the image of a *lagenaria siceraria*, known commonly as a calabash gourd or bottle-gourd, by contrast, has much stronger associations with religious Daoism. It was used by Han Xiangzi to store

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[25] Admittedly, in this work, the figures' facial characteristics diverge slightly from the model previously described: Shide is facing to the right rather than to the left, and Hanshan is shown in three-quarter view rather than in a full-frontal pose. However, other characteristics regarding Hanshan's smile and Shide's body are consistent.

[26] Hendricks, Robert G.. *The Poetry of Han-shan*, 52. Translation by Robert G. Hendricks.
仙書一両巻　樹下読喃喃.

"Nature's creative powers,"[27] and in addition to the crutch, it was a well-known attribute of Li Tieguai, since this strangely shaped vegetable with its tapered waist symbolized "the joining of heaven and earth in [the transcendent's] body."[28] Portraits of Hanshan and Shide holding a calabash are exceedingly rare; other than those painted by Shôhaku, the only such image known is Liu Jun's depiction of the two monks with Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai, in which Hanshan hangs a gourd at the level of his chest from a shoulder strap (Figure 205). As would be expected, Shôhaku often included gourds in his portraits of immortals such as Xuanyuan Ji (Figure 204), but he also showed them in the possession of Hanshan and Shide (Figure 201).

Another item in the Hanshan-Shide folding screen that deserves consideration is the enormous, woven straw hat that hangs on Shide's back (Figure 206). Upon seeing this, one might recall the Daoist hermit Zhongzhang's straw hat depicted in Shangguan Zhou's album (Figure 208). As Tsuji Nobuo has discussed,[29] Shôhaku seems to have referred to this image when painting Li Tieguai's hat in the aforementioned "Immortals" screens (Figure 209). In yet another painting, the hat is shown in Liu Haichan's possession along with a wicker basket much like Shide's (Figures 210 and 206). Protruding from Liu's basket are a couple of peaches, the quintessential symbols of immortality; one wonders if this is what the small spherical object nestled in Shide's basket is meant to represent (Figures 206-207).

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[27] Lai, T. C.. *The Eight Immortals*. (Hong Kong: Swindon Book Company, 1972), 19.
[28] Little, Stephen. *Taoism and the Arts of China*. (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; Berkeley: In association with University of California Press, 2000), 331.
[29] Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi*. (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 81.

Nagasawa Rosetsu

Rosetsu, who possessed an almost obsessive fascination with Hanshan and Shide, explored the vast array of compositions in which these figures had historically been depicted up until then, ranging from simple caricatures of the two monks to more elaborate group portraits with Fenggan and his domesticated tiger. This body of work also displays a broad range of emotional tones, and while images which presumably date to the artist's middle years such as "Folding Screen with Figure Painting" (Figure 211) exhibit the lighthearted touch that Rosetsu inherited from his teacher Maruyama Ôkyo, others such as his celebrated work at Takayamadera Temple in Wakayama (Figure 212) are far more grotesque, indicating that, according to Tsuji Nobuo, the artist sought to emulate Soga Shôhaku.[30] As with the works of Bada Shanren, the number of known paintings by Rosetsu that depict Daoist immortals are insufficient to determine by means of the kind of visual analysis employed in this chapter whether the artist adopted Shôhaku's view of Hanshan and Shide as part of the Daoist pantheon. This question, it seems, can only be answered through more thorough research into the imagery in Rosetsu's many portraits of the two Tang monks and through consideration about whether that imagery, like the scrolls and straw hats that appear in Shôhaku's works, can be interpreted as possessing specifically Daoist meaning.

While a Daoist definition of eccentric art was proposed in the conclusion of the previous chapter, in light of the difficulty of strictly categorizing particular religious

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[30] Ibid, 117.

characters such as Hanshan and Shide as either Daoist or Buddhist, an amendment to this definition seems necessary at this point. A further reason for such an alteration is to address the concept of aesthetics, particularly the artist's fascination with disturbing or transgressive imagery, as consistently seen in the portraits of Liu Haichan, Li Tieguai, Hanshan and Shide.

A revised, working definition of eccentric art is as follows: works that employs imagery deriving from either religious Daoism or Buddhism but nevertheless celebrating through that imagery heterodoxy, irrationality, social reclusion, or grotesquerie, concepts that, in the context of religious Daoism, have been traditionally viewed as indications of or means by which to attain spiritual transcendence. The term "Daoist-Buddhist figure painting," though closely connected to this form of eccentric art, is ultimately a term whose parameters are at times too narrow, eliminating non-figurative painters like Bada Shanren as well as artists such as Utagawa Kuniyoshi who employ other media. At other times, the term is too general, including not only works that challenge a viewer's preconceptions about the appropriate appearance of art but also conventionally decorative or dryly didactic images.

Though Tsuji Nobuo has stated that eccentric art as he defines it is strictly limited to the Edo period (1600-1868),[31] the time period during which art characterized by Daoist eccentricity was produced was at least several decades longer. Admittedly, the public

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[31] Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi*. Tokyo: Perikansha, 1988, as quoted in Yajima Arata 矢島新, Yamashita Yûji 山下裕二, Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄, *Nihon bijutsu no hakkenshatachi* 『日本美術の発見者たち』 (Tokyo: Daigaku shuppankai, 2003), 43.

interest in religious Daoism that characterized the Edo period[32] quickly died out as the Meiji Restoration of 1868 ushered in a revolutionary change to the Japanese national identity and a view of modernity that is often exemplified in the words of political theorist Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835-1901):

> *Today China and Korea are no help at all to our country. On the contrary, because our three countries are adjacent we are sometimes regarded as the same in the eyes of civilized Western peoples. Appraisals of China and Korea are applied to our country... and indirectly this greatly impedes our foreign policy. It is really a great misfortune for our country. It follows that in making our present plans we have not time to await the development of neighboring countries and join them in reviving Asia. Rather, we should escape from them and join the company of Western civilized nations.*[33]

In this way, at the end of the 19th century, religious Daoism, which never evolved within Japan to a point at which it lost its original Chinese associations, maintained the favor of only the most dedicated of literati. Nevertheless, during the Taishô era (1912-1926), a number of authors and visual artists resisted the uncontrolled rush towards westernization by reaffirming their interest in Chinese culture. Depictions of the monks Hanshan and Shide, which were now largely removed from the context of both Daoism and Buddhism, ushered in a new stage in the development of the eccentric art genre, and among the artists responsible for this cultural revival, the painter and author Kishida Ryûsei played a particularly important role.

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[32] Kanô Hiroyuki, "Itô Jakuchû ni tsuite," 11. In Itô Jakuchû 伊藤若冲. *Jakuchû: tokubetsu tenrankai botsugo 200-nen*, 10-44.

[33] Pyle, Kenneth B.. *The Making of Modern Japan*. 2nd edition. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath, 1996), 92. Translation by Kenneth B. Pyle.

Figure 160. Copy after Guanxiu, "Arhats," detail: figure identified as Hanshan; late 9th c. – early 10th c., ink on paper, 109.1 × 50.2 cm, Fujita Art Museum, Osaka.

Figure 161. Copy after Guanxiu, "Arhats," detail: figure identified as Shide; late 9th c. – early 10th c., ink on paper, 109.1 × 50.2 cm, Fujita Art Museum, Osaka.

Figure 162. Copy after Guanxiu, "Arhats," detail: figure identified as Fenggan with his tiger; late 9th c. – early 10th c., ink on paper, 109.1 × 50.2 cm, Fujita Art Museum, Osaka.

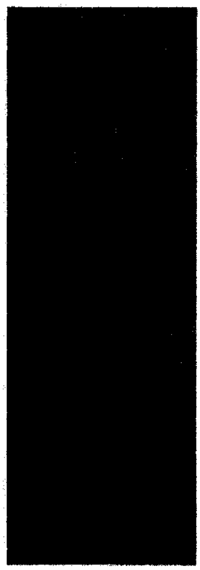

Figure 163. Attributed to Yan Hui, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Shide; 14th century, color on silk, pair of hanging scrolls, 127.6 x 41.8 cm. each. Tokyo National Museum.

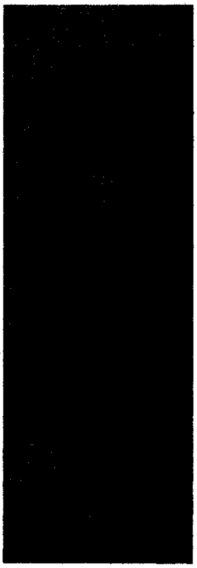

Figure 164. Attributed to Yan Hui, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Hanshan; 14th century, color on silk, pair of hanging scrolls, 127.6 x 41.8 cm. each. Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 165. Attributed to Liu Jun, "Portraits of Hanshan, Shide, Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai," detail: Tieguai; 16th c., color on silk, 134.1 x 73.1 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 166. Attributed to Liu Jun, "Portraits of Hanshan, Shide, Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai," detail: Haichan; 16th c., color on silk, 134.1 x 73.1 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 167. Attributed to Liu Jun, "Portraits of Hanshan, Shide, Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai," detail: Hanshan; 16th c., color on silk, 134.1 x 73.1 cm, Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 168. Attributed to Liu Jun, "Portraits of Hanshan, Shide, Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai," detail: Shide; 16th c., color on silk, 134.1 x 73.1 cm, Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 169. Detail of Figure 165: Li Tieguai with his crutch.

Figure 170. Detail of Figure 168: Shide with his broom.

Figure 171. Detail of Figure 167: Hanshan with his scroll.

Figure 172. Detail of Figure 166: Liu Haichan with his toad.

Figure 173. Shang Xi, "Four Immortals Honoring the God of Longevity," 1430s, ink and color on silk, hanging scroll, 98.3 x 143.8 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei.

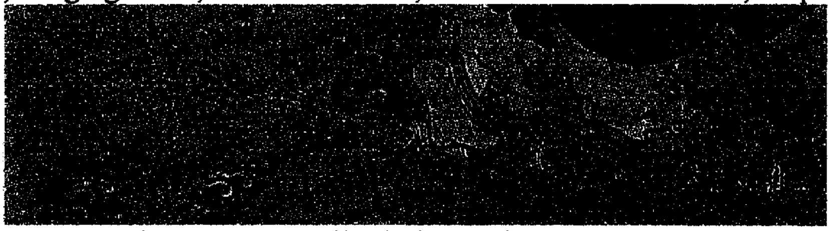

Figure 174. Detail: Shide standing on a broom.

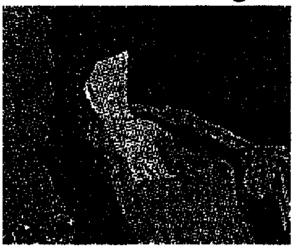

Figure 175. Detail: Hanshan holding a scroll.

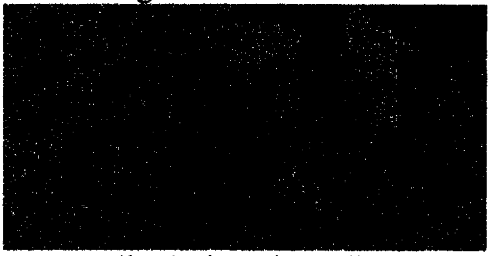

Figure 176. Detail: Li Tieguai standing on a crutch.

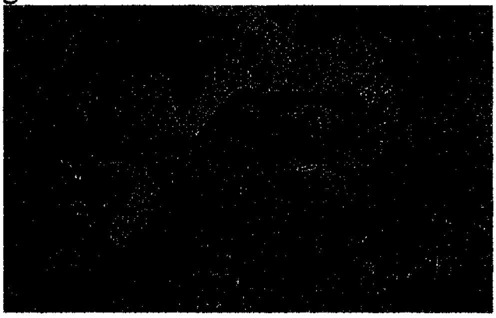

Figure 177. Detail: Liu Haichan riding an enormous toad.

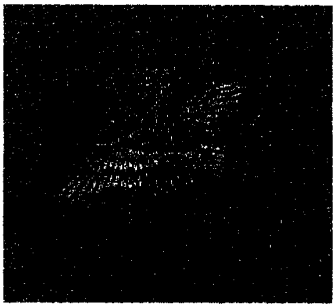

Figure 178. Detail: Shoulao riding a crane.

Figure 179. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Hanshan; 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 180. Hong Yingming, *Strange Traces of Immortals and Buddhas*, detail: illustration of Shide; 1602, ink on paper, woodblock print, Kyoto University Library, Kyoto, Japan.

Figure 181. Bada Shanren, seal with artist name of Shide, ca. 1702.

Figure 182. Bada Shanren, artist's signatures as Shide. Left: 1702-05; Right: 1702-03.

Figure 183. Bada Shanren, "Landscapes," detail: leaf d; ca. 1702-03, ink and light color on satin, album of eight leaves, Honolulu Academy of Arts.

Figure 184. Kanô Sansetsu, "Hanshan and Shide," 17th century, ink on paper, 101.5 x 130.5 cm. Collection of Shinshô Gokuraku-ji temple, Kyoto.

Figure 185. Kanô Sansetsu, "The Transcendents Li Tieguai and Lui Haichan," detail: Lui Haichan with toad; early to mid 17th c., ink and color on silk, pair of hanging scrolls, 173.0 x 88.6 cm each, Sennyû-ji Temple, Kyoto.

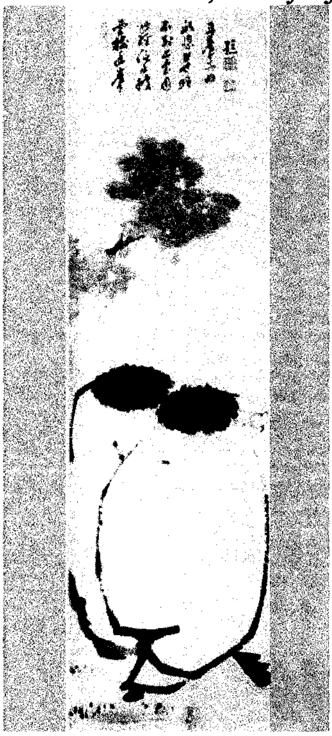

Figure 186. Ito Jakuchû, "Hanshan and Shide," ca. 1763, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 105.0 x 28.0 cm.

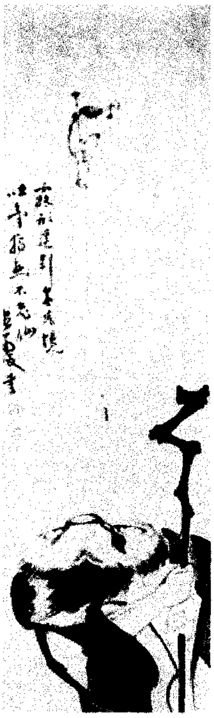

Figure 187. Itô Jakuchû, "The Two Transcendents Li Tieguai and Lui Haichan," detail: Tieguai; 1760-69, ink on paper, pair of hanging scrolls, 102.5 x 29.6 cm each, private collection, Kyoto.

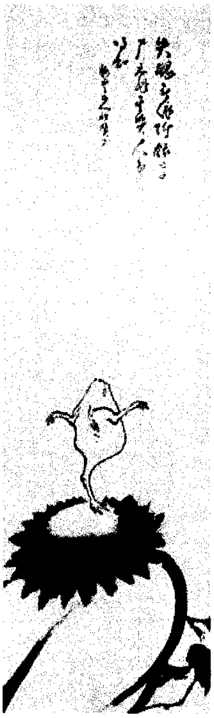

Figure 188. Itô Jakuchû, "The Two Transcendents Li Tieguai and Lui Haichan," detail: Haichan; 1760-69, ink on paper, pair of hanging scrolls, 102.5 x 29.6 cm each, private collection, Kyoto.

Figure 189. Ito Jakuchû, "Shakyamuni Triptych," detail: Manjusri; 1765, color on silk, 210.3 x 111.3 cm, Shôkokuji Temple Shôtenkaku Art Museum, Kyoto.

Figure 190. Ito Jakuchû, "Shakyamuni Triptych," detail: Samantabhadra Bodhisattva; 1765, color on silk, 210.3 x 111.3 cm, Shôkokuji Temple Shôtenkaku Art Museum, Kyoto.

Figure 191. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: Liu Haichan's face; 1764, color and ink on paper, pair of 6-fold screens, 172.0 x 378.0 cm each, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Tokyo.

Figure 192. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals Tieguai and Xiama," detail: Liu Haichan's face; circa 1772–81, two-panel screen, ink on paper, 119.4 x 51.6 cm, Musee Narita, Tokyo.

Figure 193. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Hanshan; Important Cultural Property, 1763-64, ink on paper, pair of hanging scrolls. 197.0 x 115.0 cm each. Kôshôji Temple/Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 194. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Hanshan's face.

Figure 195. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: Li Tieguai's face.

Figure 196. Soga Shôhaku, "The Immortal Tieguai," detail: Li Tieguai's face; circa 1760, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 127.0 x 27.8 cm, private collection.

Figure 197. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Shide; Important Cultural Property, 1763-64, ink on paper, pair of hanging scrolls. 197.0 x 115.0 cm each. Kôshôji Temple/Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 198. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Shide's face.

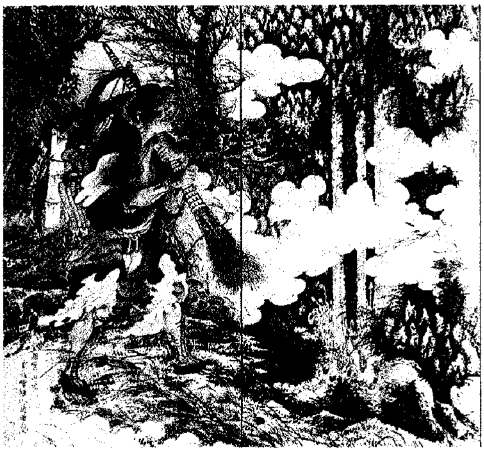

Figure 199. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: left screen; mid-18th c., ink on paper, pair of 2-fold screens. 169.2 x 185.0 cm. Private collection.

Figure 200. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: right screen; mid-18th c., ink on paper, pair of 2-fold screens. 169.2 x 185.0 cm. Private collection.

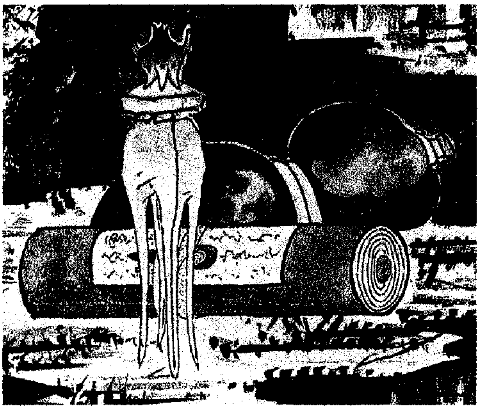

Figure 201. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," pair of 2-fold screens; detail: scroll and gourd lying next to Hanshan.

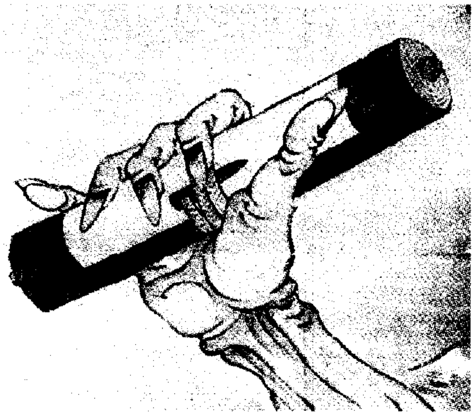

Figure 202. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," pair of hanging scrolls; detail: scroll in Hanshan's hand.

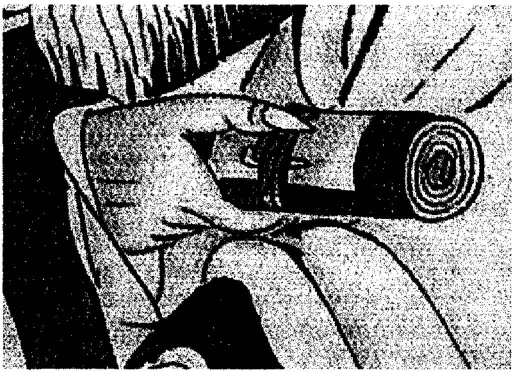

Figure 203. Soga Shôhaku, "Laozi and Landscapes," set of three hanging scrolls; detail: scroll in Laozi's hand. 1770-81, ink on paper, 96.7 x 33.1 cm, private collection.

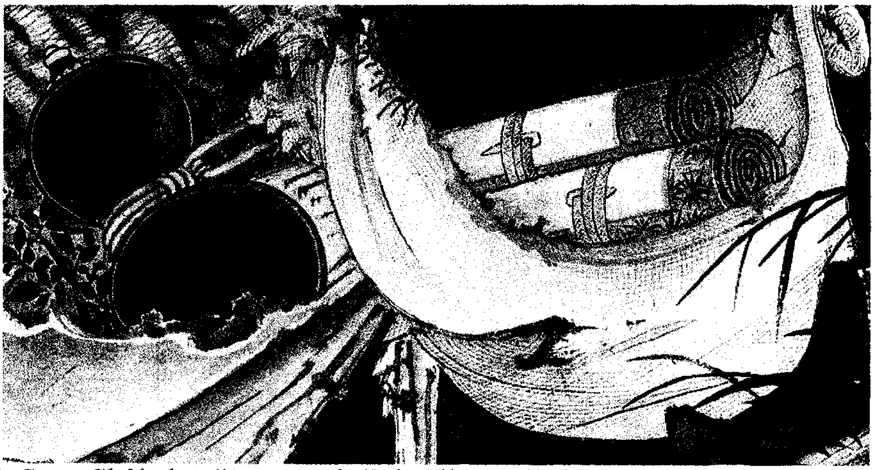

Figure 204. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," detail: scrolls in Xuanyuan Ji's bag and his gourd.

Figure 205. Attributed to Liu Jun, "Portraits of Hanshan, Shide, Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai," detail: Hanshan with a gourd.

Figure 206. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," pair of 2-fold screens; detail: Shide's hat and wicker basket.

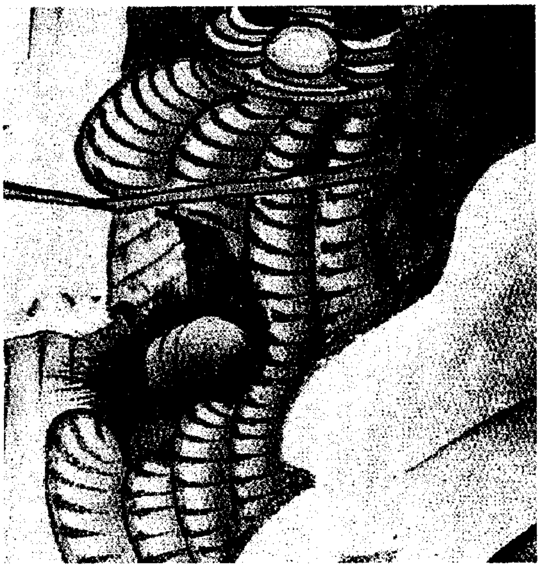

Figure 207. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," pair of 2-fold screens; detail: object in Shide's wicker basket.

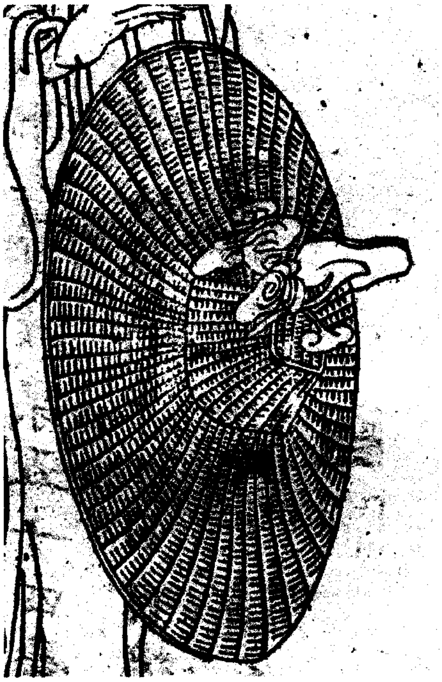

Figure 208. Shangguan Zhou, *Painting Record of the Wanxiao Hall*, detail: Zhongzhang's hat.

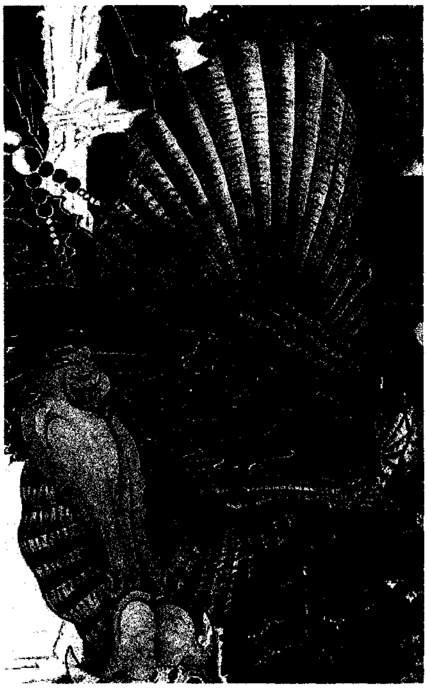

Figure 209. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals," pair of 6-fold screens; detail: Li Tieguai's hat.

Figure 210. Soga Shôhaku, "Immortals Tieguai and Xiama," detail: Liu Haichan with his hat and wicker basket.

Figure 211. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Folding Screen with Figure Painting," 18th century, ink and color on paper, 176.0 x 190.0 cm. Tokyo National Museum. Depicted are Hanshan (standing) with Shide reclining next to Fenggan's tiger.

Figure 212. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Hanshan and Shide," Selected Cultural Object of Wakayama Prefecture, 1787, ink on paper, hanging scroll, 86.5 x 160.0 cm. Takayamadera Temple, Wakayama.

Chapter Six: Kishida Ryûsei and Modern Manifestations of Daoist Eccentricity

During the Taishô and early Showa eras, the resurgence of public interest in the *Kinsei kijin-den* discussed in Chapter One accompanied a similar revival of the characters Hanshan and Shide. Well known examples of this trend include the 1916 short story "Kanzan Jittoku" 「寒山拾得」 by Mori Ôgai (森鴎外, 1862-1922) and the 1936 novel *Samantabhadra* (Jpn: *Fugen* 『普賢』) by Ishikawa Jun (石川淳, 1899-1987). Though relatively obscure, another particularly noteworthy work was the modern drama (*shingeki*) "Hanshan and Shide," which Tsubo'uchi Shôyô, the author responsible for the term *kisô* 奇想 (eccentricity), wrote and directed in 1929, the same year he completed a theatrical adaptation of *Kinsei kijin-den*.[1] In the field of painting, several well known *nihonga* painters such as Yokoyama Taikan depicted Hanshan and Shide, but by far the artist who most often portrayed these characters was Kishida Ryûsei 岸田劉生(1891-1929). Ryûsei furthermore wrote extensively about his interest in Chinese and Japanese

[1] See Tsubo'uchi Shôyô 坪内逍遥. "Kanzan Jittoku" 「寒山拾得」. *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshû dai ni hen: Tsubo'uchi Shôyô shû* 『現代日本文學全集第二篇：坪内逍遥集』 vol. 2. (Tokyo: Kaizôsha, 1929), 208-9. The likelihood that this author subscribed to a Daoist interpretation of eccentricity is suggested by his very name. Born Tsubo'uchi Yûzo 坪内雄蔵 in 1859, at the age of 25 he changed his name to Shôyô 逍遥 (formally written as 逍遙), which, like the name Jakuchû, originates from *Zhuangzi*. In particular, the name originated from the title of the first chapter of *Zhuangzi*, "Free and Easy Wandering" (逍遙遊, Ch: Xiao Yao You; Jpn: Shôyô-yû). See Zhuangzi, Burton Watson (trans.). *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*. Columbia University Press, 1970.

eccentric artists, and as an art historian, he deserves credit for having promoted a theoretical understanding of eccentric art. Though assessments of Ryûsei's late paintings and writings vary widely, these works deserve appreciation as evidence of his interest in the eccentrics Bada Shanren and Iwasa Matabei, as applications of his theories on the aesthetics of eccentric art, and as expressions of his belief in the Daoist meaning of eccentricity.

Evaluation of Ryûsei's late period

Traditionally, art historians have divided Ryûsei's career into periods corresponding to the geographical location where he and his family lived: the Ginza district of Tokyo (1907-13), the Yoyogi and Komazawa districts of Tokyo (1913-17), the Kugenuma district of Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture (1917-23), Kyoto City (1923-26), and lastly, Kamakura City (1926-29).[2] Regarding these final two periods, in which the artist largely abandoned oil painting and produced works in ink that sought to capture a particularly Asian sense of beauty, Ryûsei's daughter Kishida Reiko (岸田麗子, 1914-1962), an artist as well as the subject of her father's most famous portraits, lamented:

> *The Kyoto era of the painter Kishida Ryûsei and, even more so, his final three years and nine months in Kamakura have really not yet been researched.*
>
> *In comparison to the research on the period from my father's beginnings to his Kugenuma period, that of his Kyoto and Kamakura periods have been extremely feeble. It is necessary for my father's last artworks and*

[2] Sakai Tadayasu 酒井忠康, "Kishida Ryûsei to Kyôto" 「岸田劉生と京都」. In Kyôto shi bijutsukan 京都市美術館. *Ryûsei to Kyôto: "uchi naru bi" o motomete* 『劉生と京都：「内なる美」を求めて』. (Kyôto shiritsu bijutsukan, 2003), 10.

> ***writings to be gathered, researched, critiqued, and evaluated without any bias or fixed ideas.***[3]

Various reasons have been offered for the negative reception of Ryûsei's late period. Some critics such as Hijikata Tei'ichi 土方定一 (1904-1980) and Yashiro Yukio 矢代幸雄 (1890-1975), for example, have found the artist's earlier, western-style works (*yoga*) to be more firmly based upon the standards of an art historical canon and therefore easier to evaluate.[4] Beyond such considerations, however, a number of misconceptions about Ryûsei's late period prevent scholars from evaluating it fairly. One erroneous claim is that the artist always considered his oil paintings to be the most important accomplishments of his career and that he ultimately regretted the time he had invested in exploring Asian materials and techniques.[5] This statement is directly contradicted by Ryûsei's own writings: he found in Chinese painting a sense of mystery and spirituality that pre-modern western art as well as his own earlier work, due to their emphasis upon illusionism, sorely lacked.[6] Another source of confusion has been the distorted belief that Ryûsei's professional ambitions were limited to those of a studio artist. Seen from such a viewpoint, Ryûsei's extravagant collection of ukiyo-e paintings and Chinese paintings has been repeatedly described as evidence of his psychological instability.[7] Admittedly,

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[3] Kishida Reiko 岸田麗子. *Chichi Kishida Ryûsei* 『父岸田劉生』. (Tokyo: Chûô koronshinsha, 1987), 201.

[4] Kitazawa Noriaki 北澤憲昭, "Dekadanto Ryûsei: Kishida Ryûsei no Kyôto zaijûki ni kan suru kenkyû shi-teki kôsatsu" 「デカダント劉生―岸田劉生の京都在住期に関する研究史的考察」. In Kyôto shi bijutsukan, *Ryûsei to Kyôto*, 34-35.

[5] Tokyo kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan 東京国立近代美術館. *Botsugo gojûnen kinen Kishida Ryûsei ten zuroku* 『没後50年記念岸田劉生展図録』. (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1979), 25.

[6] Kishida Ryûsei. *Sôgen no shaseiga* 『宋元の写生画』. (Tokyo: Zenkoku shobohan, 1947), 7.

[7] "As is generally said, in his Kyoto era, it seems that [Kishida Ryûsei] spent his days and nights drinking and [collecting] early ukiyo-e painting, and sadly, his production of oil paintings diminished." Hijikata

the artist squandered his family's financial resources on his ambitious art historical research, and when considering the lack of coherence that the texts he produced through that research often display, such purchases seem to have been rather imprudent. Nevertheless, to ignore the fact that Ryûsei saw these acquisitions as an integral part of his academic research is to grossly overlook a vital aspect of his multifaceted career.

After several decades during which Ryûsei's late work was publicly championed only by his daughter Reiko, since the mid 1970s, a number of scholars have gradually come to share her appreciation. Azuma Tamaki (東珠樹, b. 1921) complemented the artist's exploration of Asian aesthetics as "a lofty and unprecedented field." In his essay "The Fine Art and Fate of Kishida Ryûsei, or The Grotesquerie of Ryûsei's Paintings," Nakamura Yoshikazu (中村義一, b. 1947) offered a far more enthusiastic defense, dismissing the popular notion that the artist's expressionistic works were evidence of mental illness.[8] At the turn of the twenty-first century, exhibitions at the Kôriyama Museum of Art in Fukushima and the Kyoto Municipal Art Museum focused exclusively

Tei'ichi 土方定一. *Kishida Ryûsei* 『岸田劉生』. (Tokyo: Nichidô shuppanbu), 1971, as quoted in Kishida Kôshirô 岸田幸四郎: *Ryûsei 1925 nen* 『劉生・一九二五年』. (Tokyo: Kaibisha, 1981), 9. "…it is a well known fact that, after his home in Kugenuma was destroyed in the Great Kantô Earthquake, [Ryûsei] moved to Kyoto, ruined his health on alcohol and the collection of antique [paintings], returned again to the Kantô district, and lived temporarily in Kamakura." Tomiyama Hideo 富山秀男, "Ban'nen no Kishida Ryûsei – koga shûshû wo chûshin ni" 「晩年の岸田劉生—古画収集を中心に」. In Kishida Ryûsei, *Kishida Ryûsei ten* 『岸田劉生展』 (Tokuyama shi bijutsu hakubutsukan, 2000), 8.

[8] Azuma Tamaki 東珠樹. *Kishida Ryûsei*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974; and Nakamura Yoshikazu 中村義一, "Kishida Ryûsei ni okeru geijutsu to unmei, arui wa Ryûsei no e no gurotesuku" 「岸田劉生における芸術と運命—あるいは劉生の絵のグロテスク」. *Mizue* 『みづゑ』 No. 881 (August 1978): 29-35, as discussed in Kitazawa, "Dekadanto Ryûsei," in Kyôto shi bijutsukan, 35.

upon these late works, and a serious discussion about the artist's intentions finally began.[9]

Ryûsei's Interest in Bada Shanren

The sources of inspiration for Ryûsei's late aesthetic theories are clearly documented in the diary that he kept from 1914 through 1928. His interest in Chinese painting began surprisingly early. After admiring various privately owned works of Chinese art, such as a painting of a cat attributed to the early Southern Song painter Mao Yi (毛益, Jpn: Môeki, act. ca. 12th-13th century), which he saw at Hara Zen'ichirô's residence in November 1919,[10] Ryûsei eventually decided in June 1922 to purchase from another acquaintance a work entitled "Camels" that was attributed to Zhao Mengfu (趙孟頫, 1254 – 1322).[11] Though Koike Masahiro has proposed that Ryûsei had no particular interest in Zhao and that he was merely interested in owning a work representative of Yuan dynasty painting,[12] soon thereafter, Ryûsei developed an insatiable fascination with Bada Shanren. In July 1922, after seeing a bird-and-flower painting attributed to the

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[9] See Kôriyama shiritsu bijutsukan 郡山市立美術館, *"Saihakken, Nihon no sugata: kiiwaado wa derori" ten* 『「再発見、日本の姿：キーワードはデロリ」展』. (Kôriyama: Kôriyama shiritsu bijutsukan, 1999); and Kyôto shi bijutsukan, *Ryûsei to Kyôto.*
[10] Kishida Ryûsei. *Ryûsei nikki* 『劉生日記』. Vol. 1, 5 volumes. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1984), 491-2; as discussed in Koike, Masahiro. "The Art of Ryûsei Kishida's Later Period." In Tokyo kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan 東京国立近代美術館. *Botsugo gojûnen kinen Kishida Ryûsei ten zuroku* 『没後 50 年記念岸田劉生展図録』. (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1979), 26. Translation by Margaret Miller Kanada.
[11] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 3, 226-7; as discussed in Koike, 26. Translation by Margaret Miller Kanada.
[12] Koike, 26. Translation by Margaret Miller Kanada.

Yuan eccentric at Kenkadô 兼葭堂 gallery,[13] he repeatedly mentioned Bada in his diary,[14] and he eventually decided to purchase the painting at the price of two hundred yen.[15] Later, on March 7th of the following year, he further received a landscape painting attributed to Bada from his acquaintance Mr. Takezoe 竹添.[16] To the extent that a sketch drawn by Ryûsei at this time and labeled "Picture by Bada Shanren" (Figure 213) is a faithful description, this painting was rather similar in appearance to the landscapes Bada produced around 1702 (Figure 214).

Within days of his initial exposure to the work of Bada Shanren, Ryûsei decided to adopt the eccentric's painting style.[17] A landscape by Ryûsei dated to 1923-26 (Figure 215) clearly shows the ways in which he interpreted this style. A clearing amidst the grove of trees in the foreground reveals a foot bridge that spans a small, quietly flowing stream, while mountain peaks rise up out of the mist in the distance. The most striking elements in this painting are the trees that, upon comparison, are closely modeled upon those in Bada's landscapes. Rather than gracefully tapering as they ascend, their trunks alternately bulge and constrict, and some, unable to support their own weight, slump or suddenly careen to the side as if composed of rubber. The surfaces of the trunks appear

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[13] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 3, 244-5.

[14] From July 14, 1922 through the remainder of that year, Ryûsei mentions Bada Shanren in his diary on twenty separate occasions. See Ibid, vol. 3, 244-5 (July 14), 252 (July 20), 255 (July 22), 256 (July 23), 257 (July 24), 260 (July 26), 265 (July 29), 297 (Aug. 25), 300 (Aug. 27), 301 (Aug. 28), 303 (Aug. 30), 306 (Sept. 1), 318-9 (Sept. 10), 326 (Sept. 17), 332 (Sept. 22), 349 (Oct. 10), 372-3 (Oct. 24), 398 (Nov. 10), 411 (Nov. 19), and 451 (Dec. 20). The following year (1923), he mentions Bada in thirteen entries. See Ibid, vol. 4, 60 (Feb. 21), 79 (March 6), 79 (March 7), 80-81 (March 8), 96 (March 23), 103 (March 39), 119 (April 10), 154 (May 10), 188 (June 7), 188 (June 8), 189 (June 9), 279 (Sept. 5), and 368 (Nov. 12).

[15] Ibid, vol. 3, 260.

[16] Ibid, vol. 4, 79.

[17] Ibid, vol. 3, 256.

perfectly smooth, and the only details that they display are the tentatively painted *mi* dots at their bases and the random tufts of green further up. Ironically, Ryûsei's academic training, noticeable in way objects such as the bridge adhere to the laws of linear perspective, prevents him from effectively achieving the sense of naiveté for which Bada Shanren's works are so widely admired, but the work speaks loudly of Ryûsei's desire to identify and internalize those elements in Bada's work that distinguished the Yuan painter as an eccentric.

Ryûsei's interest in Iwasa Matabei

In March 1921, even before he began to collect and take inspiration from the works of Chinese painters like Bada Shanren, Ryûsei developed a deep interest in Japanese ukiyo-e, and this genre soon became the main focus of his art acquisition. He collected woodblock prints by a wide range of artists, including Harunobu to Utamaro, Hokusai, and Hiroshige, but he was most enthusiastic about early genre painting (*nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* 肉筆浮世絵).[18] His exploration of ukiyo-e coincided with a sudden appreciation for kabuki theater, performances of which he began to attend at approximately the same time.[19] In his diary, Ryûsei cited the most impressive aspects of these performances as the "bizarre, classical sense"[20] and the "powerful feeling of strange grotesquerie"[21] exuded by the performers.

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[18] Segi Shin'ichi 瀬木慎一. *Kishida Ryûsei: bi to sei no hontai* 『岸田劉生一美と生の本体』. (Tôkyô shiki shuppan, 1998), 174. See also Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 2, 93.
[19] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 2, 27.
[20] Ibid, vol. 2, 27.
[21] Ibid, vol. 3, 85-6.

Although Ryûsei had also expressed interest in the work of Utagawa Kuniyoshi,[22] the artist in whom he was most intrigued was unquestionably the supposed founder of the ukiyo-e genre, Iwasa Matabei. Ryûsei became familiar with the work of Matabei sometime before May 1922, at which time he wrote an article for *Shirakaba* magazine in which he stated, "These days, I feel myself drawn ever more towards the art of ancient China… and I am drawn to ukiyo-e, especially to the sense of line developed by Matabei the First. There is a robust sort of mystique to it which attracts me."[23] When Ryûsei visited Kottôya 骨董屋 gallery at the end of 1923, he came across a folding screen attributed to Matabei and depicting a group of revelers admiring cherry blossoms. The work, he claims in his diary, exuded a "strong, mystical" presence that "absolutely dumbfounded" him, and despite the fact that his family's recent move to Kyoto and his subsequent unemployment left him in a state of financial desperation, he seriously contemplated purchasing the painting for the price of 2,500 yen.[24] (Figure 216.) Although he eventually abandoned this plan, Ryûsei's discovery of this screen seemed to suddenly intensify his interest in the Edo painter: during 1924, Ryûsei mentions Matabei in no less than sixty-nine separate diary entries, each of which often included multiple references to the Edo artist.[25]

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[22] Ibid, vol. 3, p. 386.

[23] Kishida Ryûsei, *Shirakaba*, May 1922, reprinted in Kishida Ryûsei. *Kishida Ryûsei zenshû* 『岸田劉生全集』. Vol. 3, 10 volumes. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1979; and quoted in Takashina, Shûji, et. al.. *Paris in Japan: The Japanese Encounter with European Painting*. (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1987), 160. Translation by Atsushi Tanaka.

[24] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 4, 413. In comparing Ryûsei's verbal description and sketch to recent studies on Matabei, this work appears to have either been attributed to another artist or lost sometime after December 1923.

[25] Ibid, v. 5, 12-18 (Jan. 1), 21 (Jan. 14), 22 (Jan. 15), 35 (Jan. 27), 38 (Jan. 28), 45 (Feb. 3), 60 (Feb. 14), 62 (Feb. 15), 69 (Feb. 22), 70 (Feb. 23), 72 (Feb. 24), 89 (Mar. 10), 94 (Mar. 16), 95-6 (Mar. 17), 98 (Mar.

Since many of the works that Ryûsei believed to be by Matabei have since been lost, determining their authenticity is often impossible. Furthermore, the first known standard work of Matabei was identified only as recently as 1886,[26] and even now scholars continue to disagree about the veracity of many attributions.[27] One work whose attribution has been the subject of particularly passionate debate is the so-called "Hikone Screen" (Figure 217). Dated to sometime between 1624 and 1644, this painting depicts a bordello in which a number of characters are gathered together and pursuing various leisure activities. On the far right, two women – one walking her pet dog and another returning from the public bath – chat with a young man whose confident, flirtatious demeanor is evident in the way he stands upon one foot and, using his sheathed sword to brace himself, slumps over to one side. (Figure 218.) In the central section, several people are gathered and, as Penelope Mason describes, "reading aloud, listening, and writing as if by dictation."[28] (Figure 219.) On the left end, a trio of musicians play their *shamisen* while another group plays a game of *go* in front of a Kanô-style folding screen. (Figure 220.) Rather than these figures or their actions, however, one may argue that the

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20), 102 (Mar. 23), 110 (Mar. 31), 120 (Apr. 7), 121 (Apr. 9), 123 (Apr. 10), 124 (Apr. 11), 125 (Apr. 12), 128-9 (Apr. 15), 130 (Apr. 17), 133-4 (Apr. 20), 134 (Apr. 21), 134 (Apr. 22), 137 (Apr. 23), 143 (Apr. 29), 144 (Apr. 30), 148 (May 2), 149 (May 2), 153 (May 5), 160 (May 11), 162 (May 12), 166 (May 16), 167 (May 17), 168 (May 18), 173 (May 24), 179 (May 28), 179 (May 29), 186 (June 4), 197 (June 16), 202 (June 20), 204 (June 21), 206 (June 22), 218 (July 4), 219 (July 5), 286 (Sept. 11), 290 (Sept. 16), 291 (Sept. 17), 291 (Sept 18), 292 (Sept. 19), 294 (Sept. 21), 297 (Sept. 24), 298 (Sept. 26), 300 (Sept. 28), 311 (Oct. 9), 314 (Oct. 12), 315 (Oct. 13), 324 (Oct. 21), 330 (Oct. 27), 345 (Nov. 11), 351 (Nov. 18), 373 (Dec. 18), 374 (Dec. 19), 378 (Dec. 23), 378 (Dec. 24), and 379 (Dec. 25).

[26] Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi*. (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 25.

[27] Ibid, 32-9.

[28] Mason, Penelope. *History of Japanese Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 238.

prime subject of this painting is the aesthetic of *iki* embodied in the sumptuous, uniquely designed robe that each character wears.[29]

Kishida Ryûsei's earliest writings about the attribution of the "Hikone Screen" date to 1923, the year of the Great Kantô Earthquake. On January 26th of that year, the artist mentions seeing a copy of what he refers to as "Matabei's Hikone Screen" at the home of a friend, and desiring a copy of his own, paints his own interpretation of the work the following day.[30] His deep regard for this artwork is further illustrated in another diary entry immediately after the earthquake struck that September. In the midst of salvaging the remaining possessions from his destroyed home, he mentions having read a newspaper report that claimed the artwork was burnt in the aftermath of the quake. "I pray this is untrue!" he writes. "Oh, Lord, please watch over it!"[31] Ultimately, the news report is revealed to be inaccurate, and Ryûsei rejoices, "I am overjoyed. I truly prayed that [God] would save it."[32] In Ryûsei's opinion, one of the aspects of this artwork that gave it such art historical importance was its expression of Matabei's painting style. Three years later, in his essay "Regarding Iwasa Matabei Katsumochi," he finally announced his belief about the screen:

> ***I must say that.. the public, whose eye for beauty has attributed the Hikone Screen and other such famous yet unsigned works of ukiyo-e... to the brush of Matabei, the most talented of ukiyo-e artists, is more accurate than the official [scholars who reject this idea].***[33]

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[29] See Kuki Shûzô, John Clark (trans.). *Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki.* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1997); especially "Chapter 4: The Artistic Expression of Iki," 85-109.
[30] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki,* vol. 4, 31-2.
[31] Ibid, vol. 4, 301.
[32] Ibid, vol. 4, 335.
[33] Kishida Ryûsei, "Iwasa Matabei Katsumochi ni tsuite." 「岩佐又兵衛勝以に就て」 In *Shoki nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* 『初期肉筆浮世絵』. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1926), 103.

In *Kisô no keifu*, Tsuji discusses the beginnings of the Great Matabei Debate, a disagreement among art historians about whether Matabei had painted various, highly prized artworks, including the Hikone Screen and several newly discovered handscrolls. Around 1928, a bookstore clerk named Hasegawa Minokichi identified what was formerly thought to be an anonymous, relatively unimportant handscroll to be Matabei's lost masterpiece "Yamanaka Tokiwa." Soon thereafter, the art historian Haruyama Takematsu (1885-1962) wrote an article in the Osaka Asahi newspaper that claimed Matabei to be the artist of both Yamanaka Tokiwa and the Hikone Screen.[34] Tsuji fails to mention, however, Ryûsei's public defense of this claim in 1926. Ultimately, the belief that Matabei had painted the Hikone Screen has been judged inaccurate,[35] but nevertheless, considering the extent to which Tsuji's scholarship was based upon Ryûsei's and the fact that this debt has been acknowledged by other scholars, Tsuji's decision to entirely omit from *Kisô no keifu* any mention of Ryûsei's writings is truly ironic.[36]

As early as January 1923, Ryûsei was painting portraits of his daughter in Matabei's style. One such portrait shows Reiko, dressed in an brilliantly colored kimono, sitting in *seiza* style, facing to the viewer's right, and playing the shamisen. (Figure 221.) In these aspects, she closely resembles the young woman on the left side of the Hikone

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[34] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi*. (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 13, 32.
[35] Ibid, 39. Tsuji judges the screen to be the creation of "a[n unidentified] master of the Kanô school."
[36] A comparison between the contents of Kishida Ryûsei, "Iwasa Matabei Katsumochi ni tsuite." and the chapter on Matabei in Tsuji, 9-41. reveals this debt. Sandy Kita has stated, "...Kishida's 1927 article on Matabei contained the core of an idea, which, as developed by... Tsuji Nobuo after 1960, provides the basis for the current resolution of the Matabei controversy." Kita, Sandy. *The Last Tosa: Iwasa Katsumochi Matabei, bridge to Ukiyo-e*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 57.

Screen (Figure 220). A diary entry by the artist dated January 27, 1923 confirms that these similarities were indeed intentional: "I painted it with the Hikone Screen in mind," he states.[37] In a standing portrait begun the following October, Reiko wears the same kimono and holds a folding fan in her right hand. (Figure 222.) Although the artist acknowledged the similarities between this pose and that of a dancer depicted in a folding screen he discussed in his 1926 publication *Early Ukiyo-e Painting* (Figure 223),[38] this image of Reiko was likewise originally inspired by an unidentified work attributed to Matabei.[39] On the box in which the painting was stored after its completion, Ryûsei inscribes an explanation of the ways in which such homages as this were meant to represent Matabei's style:

> *... this work is a genre painting in the style of old ukiyo-e paintings, that is to say, the work of Matabei. What I try to communicate in this painting is the vitality of [Reiko's] facial skin, the rusticity of [her] attire, as well as the overall sense of intense solemnity and mystery. If one detects a bit of sublimity that seems rather unpleasant at first glance, it should be said that this is [the source of] this painting's vitality.*[40]

Ryûsei's terminology and aesthetic theories

When discussing the paintings of Bada Shanren and Iwasa Matabei as well as his own late works, Kishida Ryûsei struggled to adequately describe their virtues. Tsubo'uchi Shôyô's term *kisô* 奇想 did not become a well known part of the Japanese art historical lexicon until after the Pacific War, and though Ryûsei occasionally described

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[37] Kishida Ryûsei. *Kishida Ryûsei* 『岸田劉生』. Gendai Nihon bijutsu zenshu 『現代日本美術全集』, vol. 8. (Tokyo: Shûeisha, 1972), 120.
[38] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 5, 57 (February 12, 1924).
[39] Kishida Ryûsei, diary for October 28, 1923, as quoted in Kamon Yasuo 嘉門安雄, *Kishida Ryûsei* 『岸田劉生』, Nihon kindai kaiga zenshû 『日本近代絵画全集』, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1962), 48.
[40] Kishida Ryûsei, *Kishida Ryûsei*, Gendai Nihon bijutsu zenshu, 120.

the work of Matabei as *yipin*,[41] he usually resorted to vocabulary of his own invention. He used the name "Matabei" as an adjective for not only works by the Edo painter but also the bizarre atmosphere of a kabuki performance[42] or the comical sight of a drunkard stumbling down the street with a cluster of helium balloons.[43] The terms that he used most frequently to discuss work such as Matabei's were decadence, *derori*, *hikinbi*, and grotesquerie, and through the various essays in which Ryûsei utilized these terms, he gradually delineated what might be considered a foundation for the aesthetics of eccentric art.

Decadence

In his 1922 essay "A Consideration of Decadence," Ryûsei's familiarity with the European Decadent art movement is evident in his choice of the imported word *dekadansu* デカダンス over synonymous character compounds such as *daraku* 堕落 as well as in his occasional references to Félicien Rops (1833-1898) and Audrey Beardsley (1872-1898).[44] The writings of European critics such as Désiré Nisard (1806-1888) and Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), in fact, may have indirectly influenced Ryûsei's ideas. Ryûsei is quick to condemn as *artistic decadence* images that fails to spiritually uplift viewers and that are instead intended to provoke base feelings such as disgust.[45] This

[41] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 5, 38 (January 28, 1924) and 204 (June 21, 1924).
[42] Ibid, vol. 5, 60 (February 14, 1924).
[43] Ibid, vol. 5, 128-9 (April 15, 1924).
[44] Kishida Ryûsei. "Dekadansu no kôsatsu" 「デカダンスの考察」. *Ukiyo-e hanga no gakôtachi* 『浮世絵版画の画工たち』 (Tokyo: Kofusha shoten, 1970), 211-12.
[45] Ibid, 194.

comment evokes one of the first usages of the term decadence in the context of aesthetics, Nisard's critique of Victor Hugo (1802-1885):

> *... In him, the imagination... is a queen who governs unchecked. Reason finds no place in his works. No practical or applicable ideas, nothing or next to nothing of real life; no philosophy, no morals.*[46]

Along with this pejorative concept of decadence, Ryûsei also discusses what he refers to as *decadent art*, works that are psychologically or morally corrupt in some way but that, due to the artists' passionate, persistent efforts to formally develop them, transcend the level of base impulses and ultimately offer viewers a sense of infinity, solemnity, and vitality. In such cases, the deviant mindset from which the art was originally born ought not to be thought of as detracting from the artist's goals; on the contrary, the artist's warped psyche ought to be recognized as the very tool that enabled him or her to reach such lofty heights of brilliance.[47] Again, Ryûsei's idea is not entirely without precedent: in his preface to the 1868 edition of Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Théophile Gautier described decadence as a highly refined artistic sensibility based upon psychological instability:

> *The style of decadence... is ingenious, complicated, learned, full of shades of meaning and research... taking colours from all palettes... forcing itself to express... in form the vaguest and most fleeting contours... that it may translate them... to the singular hallucinations of the fixed idea verging on madness.*[48]

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[46] Nisard, Désiré. "M. Victor Hugo in 1836," as quoted in Calinesce, Matei. *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1987), 161.
[47] See Ryûsei's discussion of Harunobu in Kishida Ryûsei, "Dekadansu no kosatsu," 212-13.
[48] Gautier, Théophile. Preface to Baudelaire, Charles and Théophile Gautier. *Les Fleurs du Mal* (Paris: Lévy, 1868), 17-18, as quoted in Nordau, Max. *Degeneration* (London, W. Heinemann, 1920), 299. Translated by Nordau.

When he attempts to illustrate these opposing facets of decadence, Ryûsei unfortunately displays a superficial understanding of western art, claiming that Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Titian (ca.1485-1576), and Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) were pioneers of decadent art[49] while discrediting the accomplishments of symbolists such as Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) and Félician Rops.[50] Ryûsei's Japanese examples seem much more reasonable. In general, he dismisses Japanese erotic prints (*shunga*) as *artistic decadence*. Within this genre, however, he singles out Suzuki Harunobu (1725-1770) as an artist whose talent and technical expertise enabled him to transcend the lustful feelings that inspired his images and to ultimately produce stunning works of *decadent art*.[51] A clear example of Ryûsei's point is Harunobu's "Amorous Overtones" (Figure 224), in which a mood of erotic passion communicated through the central figures is sublimated by the careful balance of color, line, and tone throughout the entire print.

Ryûsei's theory about art that springs from psychological or moral disorder bears striking similarities to the "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity" about which, as discussed in Chapter One, Ban Kôkei and Tsuji Nobuo wrote so extensively. Ryûsei, however, further emphasizes the fact that a great deal of personal struggle is necessary for an artist in such a state of mind to produce noteworthy work imbued with an aura of mystique and spirituality.

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[49] Kishida Ryûsei. "Dekadansu no kôsatsu," 214-15.
[50] Ibid, 211.
[51] Ibid, 211.

Hikinbi

Like Ryûsei's concept of decadence, his thoughts on ***hikinbi, derori,*** and grotesquerie, all of which describe forms of unconventional beauty, ultimately refer back to the artist's moral or psychological health. The connection between beauty and morality was a popular topic of discussion among Taishô art theorists. In his essays "Pleasure and Occupation" ("Dôraku to shokugyô") and "The Enlightenment of Modern Japan" ("Gendai Nihon no kaika"), Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916) stressed the ideological power of beautiful artwork, particularly its ability to inspire moral rectitude.[52] As seen in Sôseki's critique of the 6th Bunten exhibition of 1912,[53] conventional beauty was particularly demanded of *nihonga* painting, which was considered to be a modern development of *yamato-e* and therefore venerated as an expression of traditional Japanese aesthetics. In her analysis of Kajiwara Hisako 梶原緋佐子(1896-1988), Michiyo Morioka has discussed how the artist portrayed through intentionally murky coloration and awkward linework the harrowing daily lives of lower-class women.[54] Such works, Morioka notes, were denounced by critics of the time as "vulgar realism" (*aku shajitsu* 悪写実),[55] a charge laden with moralistic nuance. Hisako's rejected superficial beauty and defied such conservative beliefs about artistic propriety in order to inspire in viewers a

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[52] Yiu, Angela. *Chaos and Order in the Works of Natsume Sôseki* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 83-4.
[53] Natsume Sôseki 夏目漱石. "Bunten to Geijutsu" 「文展と芸術」. *Sôseki zenshû* 『漱石全集』 vol. 11 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1966), 389-420.
[54] Morioka, Michiyo. *Changing Images of Women: Taishô-Period Paintings by Uemura Shôen (1875-1945), Itô Shôha (1877-1968), and Kajiwara Hisako (1896-1988)* (Dissertation: University of Washington, Seattle, 1990), 270-276.
[55] Ishii Hakutei 石井柏亭, "Teiten no kaiga" 「帝展の絵画」, *Chûô bijutsu* 『中央美術』 11, no. 11 (November 1925): 89; as discussed in Morioka, 270, 275.

sense of egalitarianism. By comparison, Ryûsei's embrace of vulgarity seems at first glance to be little more than aesthetic self-indulgence. By recognizing the way in which his theories were in fact based upon his hope to revitalize public interest in the genre of eccentric art, however, Ryûsei's late work can perhaps be more fully appreciated.

Ryûsei's 1922 essay "Regarding the 'Hikinbi' of Asian Art" highlights the way in which most art historical discussions are founded upon the elitist separation between images worthy of attention – those that are designated as "blatantly beautiful" – and the otherwise inconsequential visual terrain that stands in stark contrast to these images. His term ***hikinbi*** 卑近美 is an ironic attack upon this assumption, referring to the ill-recognized but nevertheless inherent beauty (***bi***) of the common, vulgar realm (***hikin***). When expressed through the efforts of a painter of exceptional talent, he claims, a face, shape, or gesture that embodies ***hikinbi*** appears far more profound than blatant glamour, which tends to offer nothing more than transitory pleasure.[56]

Ryûsei's ideas about ***hikinbi***, which, as the title of his essay implies, is particular to Chinese and Japanese painting, were motivated by his wish to understand why works of Asian art appeared so terribly lacking according to the standards of western aesthetics. In his defense of Asian art, ironically, Ryûsei attacked the very European painting traditions that he had so enthusiastically embraced in his early career. Blatant beauty, he explains, is exemplified by European oil paintings, and "if one were to ignore such blatant beauty, as a natural result, he or she would come to appreciate its antithesis, which

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[56] Kishida Ryûsei. "Tôyô geijutsu no hikinbi ni tsuite" 「東洋芸術の卑近美について」. *Ukiyo-e hanga no gakôtachi.* (Tokyo: Kofusha shoten, 1970), 184-86.

is an ultimately more profound aesthetic: the common beauty (*hikinbi*) of Asian art."[57] Within the context of pre-modern Japanese culture, the *hikinbi* aesthetic is clearly evident in kabuki theater,[58] particularly in the performances of Ichikawa Danshirô II 二代市川段四郎(1855-1922). Evidence of this actor's rare genius, Ryûsei's states, is the vulgar, disquieting aura he exudes on stage.[59] Although Ryûsei is not known to have painted Danshirô, a portrait of the actor by Yamamura Toyonari 山村耕花 (1885-1942) indeed conveys such a mood. (Figure 225.)

Beyond the limits of Edo theater, Ryûsei further argues, one can find evidence of *hikinbi* throughout Asian art history. From the field of Chinese painting, Ryûsei draws several other examples, clearly revealing the connection between the *hikinbi* aesthetic and the genre of eccentric art. In particular, he cites the portraits of Hanshan, Shide, Liu Haichan, and other characters whose "shabby physiques, protruding necks, slouching postures, and vile, condescending, cynical facial expressions" produce a visceral reaction in viewers.[60] What Ryûsei neglects to mention is that each of these characters is known primarily for his strikingly asocial behavior, interpreted alternately as amorality or mental instability, and that his unbecoming physical appearance is mainly regarded as an outward expression of that internal corruption. In this way, *hikinbi* is essentially the primary signifier of "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity" and thereby one of the dominant aesthetics of *decadent art*.

[57] Ibid, 186.
[58] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 3, 96-8.
[59] Kishida Ryûsei, "Tôyô geijutsu no hikinbi ni tsuite," 188-89.
[60] Ibid, 181.

Derori

In describing works such as those produced by Matabei, Ryûsei provoked both the curiosity and, at times, the contempt of his fellow art historians by using another coined term the meaning of which, unlike that of *hikinbi*, he never explicitly defined.[61] In 1924, he occasionally inserted into his essays and diary musings onomatopoetic expressions such as *dero-dero* (デロデロ)[62] and *deyatto shita* (デヤっとした),[63] but the expression he eventually came to most frequently use was *derori* (デロリ). Ryûsei's first mention of *derori* appears in a kyôgen theater review published in *Shin'engei* magazine in June 1924. In a tangent from his discussion of the play "The Subscription List," Ryûsei mentions:

> *When looking at a work... from the time of Moronobu... what interests me is that in this work... the piquant, fat, tough, bizarre, vulgar beauty of* derori, *originating from the early period of* ukiyo-e *(known as the school of Iwasa Matabei), gradually undergoes refinement, becomes technically sophisticated, becomes pristine, and gives birth to schools such as that of Hishikawa and Minagawa.... Truly, it is said that Torii Kiyonobu, upon noticing how prints by the Hishikawa school were becoming increasingly pristine, once again returned to the sensibility of the early period.*[64]

[61] Kita, 59.
[62] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 5, 338 (November 3, 1924).
[63] Kishida Ryûsei. "Kyôto minami-za rokugatsu kyôgen shokan fu kanjinchô to iu mono no kangae" 「京都南座六月狂言所感附勧進帳といふものの考へ」, *Shin'engei* 『新演芸』 9, no. 7 (June 1924): 49.
[64] Ibid, 50-51. Ryûsei specifically refers to "Moronobu's kyôgen prints," but since such prints are no longer attributed to Moronobu, one of his erotic prints has been chosen here to illustrate Ryûsei's idea. In his writings, Ryûsei never specifically discussed Moronobu's erotic prints, but when considering the praise that Ryûsei lavishes upon Moronobu in texts such as this one, it can be safely assumed that Ryûsei would have considered these prints to be examples of *decadent art*, much like the work of Harunobu.

Works by Hishikawa Moronobu (d. 1694) and Torii Kiyonobu (1664-1729) indeed share characteristics that to an artist academically trained in western painting methods such as Ryûsei may seem technically crude. In Moronobu's "Young Man Dallying with a Courtesan" (Figure 226), for example, the heads of the figures display the sort of expressionless *hikime kagibana* 引目鉤鼻 (linear eyes and hook-like noses) characteristic of yamato-e works such as the *Tale of Genji* handscroll, and each figure's hair is represented as a solid, smooth, black mass with only a narrow row of white stripes to indicate its actual texture. The overall two-dimensional composition of the image is more heavily emphasized than the illusion of pictorial depth, and for this reason, objects such as the shamisen and discarded robe appear to be floating beside the figures. In the same way, Moronobu emphasizes a garment's pattern rather than its three-dimensional form, as evident in the lovers' robes. The same features can be found in Kiyonobu's "Lady Sannomiya," which has been described by Sakato Yaichirô as "the most revealing example of how Kiyonobu was influenced by Moronobu."[65] (Figure 227.)

Moronobu's and Kiyonobu's depictions of naked bodies, so strikingly unlike the western nudes that Ryûsei copied in his earlier career, may have likewise inspired the Taishô painter's ideas about *derori*. The musculature of both the ogre in Moronobu's *Tale of Oeyama* series (Figure 228) and the burly men found in particular actor prints by Kiyonobu (Figure 229) is so dramatically emphasized yet so far removed from the anatomy of western nudes that the figures' flesh seems to be squirming. While Ryûsei

[65] Sakato Yaichirô 坂戸弥一郎, ed.. *Ukiyo-e taika shusei* 『浮世絵大家集成』 2. (Taihôkaku Shobô, 1932), pl. 2 caption.

may have seen such characteristics as technical flaws, he may just as easily have interpreted them as attempts by Moronobu and Kiyonobu to instill their works with a sense of bizarreness and vulgarity.

In the way that they flaunt popular notions of beauty, these latter images by Moronobu and Kiyonobu seem to conform to the aforementioned definition of ***hikinbi*** as much as to that of *derori*. Some art historians have proposed that *derori* is in fact synonymous with ***hikinbi***,[66] and several statements by Ryûsei support this interpretation. *Derori* can apparently be found in kabuki theater, particularly in the artistry of Ichikawa Danshirô II,[67] and it is further described as a characteristic particular to Asian people.[68]

Although the idea that the phonologically similar expressions *deya deya*, *deyatto shita* and *derori* are synonymous seems to have been generally accepted,[69] several art historians have expressed doubts regarding the idea that *derori* can be simply explained as a synonym of ***hikinbi***. Kanno Hiroto 菅野洋人 offers an etymological explanation for the term *derori*: in pre-modern Japan, when festivals were held, street musicians would occasionally entertain the crowd with stories recited in a singsong style, accompanied by a shamisen and a conch horn, and punctuated with the vocalization, "*Dendere! Dendere-re-re!*" Fukutomi proposes that this performing art, known as *deroren saimon* デロレン祭文, inspired Ryûsei's term and refers to the vulgar sensibility that many felt *deroren*

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[66] Kitazawa Noriaki writes hikinbi 卑近美 with the phonetic notation (*furigana*) "derorism" 卑近美(デロリズム). Kitazawa, "Dekadanto Ryûsei," in Kyôto shi bijutsukan, 35.
[67] Kishida Ryûsei. "Kyôto minami-za rokugatsu kyôgen shokan fu kanjinchô to iu mono no kangae," 48.
[68] Kishida Ryûsei, *Shoki nikuhitsu ukiyo-e* 『初期肉筆浮世絵』. (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1926), 7.
[69] One exception appears to be Ryûsei's own son-in-law Kishida Kôshirô. See Kishida Kôshirô 岸田幸四郎. *Ryûsei 1925-nen* 『劉生・一九二五年』 (Tokyo: Kaibisha, 1981), 8.

saimon expressed. This theory is supported by an entry in Ryûsei's diary dated October 27, 1923 in which the artist writes, "...the sound of a shamisen – *den den*! – and the voice of a *gidayû* performer."[70]

Tsuji Nobuo has remarked how Ryûsei often reserved the word *derori* for his discussions of Matabei's work, and based upon those comments, he concludes that the quintessential example of *derori* is the painting "Bathhouse Girls" ("Yuna"), which Ryûsei attributed to Matabei (Figure 230).[71] Elaborating upon Tsuji's interpretation, Sandy Kita explains:

> *Even to those who had never heard this word before, [*derori*] sounded like things natural but unmentionable – course, vulgar, eccentric, decadent, and sensuous.... It has overtones of the abject, suggesting the sweet smell of decay – at once fascinating and repelling. Like the word* torori, *it refers to the glutinous stickiness of certain semiliquid foods and suggests a certain languid heaviness in people. Darkness and decadence are evoked as well....the coarse yet powerful sexuality of cheapest of prostitutes does capture well the feel of this complex and subtle term.* Derori *may then, for purposes of simplicity, be described as a repellent but compelling sensuality.*[72]

While *hikinbi* has been defined as a form of beauty that exists within common forms and that is recognized as beauty by only the most perceptive of artists, according to Kita, *derori* is a complex beauty composed of both erotic attraction and revulsion. Among the previously discussed prints by Moronobu and Kiyonobu, the latter pair seem to reflect this definition: if they were depicted with more anatomical accuracy and without any

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[70] Kanno Hiroto, "Joron: 'Derori' ni tsuite," in Koriyama Municipal Art Museum, 9. A more thorough discussion of the variations of *saimon* can be found in Groemer, Gerald. "The Arts of the Gannin," *Asian Folklore Studies* 58, No. 2 (1999): 275-320, especially 301-04.

[71] "... 'Bathhouse Girls'... is thought to perhaps be a work by the creator of the 'Hikone Screen'..." Kishida Ryûsei, *Shoki nikuhitsu ukiyo-e*, 92.

[72] Kita, 58-59.

mutilation, the burly figures would probably have an alluring appeal to viewers. However, according to this interpretation of *derori*, even with their grotesque defects, these figures nevertheless exude an erotic charm.

Grotesquerie

Perhaps Ryûsei's most provocative belief was an extension of his thoughts on *derori*. Not only does a figure such as that of Moronobu's decapitated ogre seem undeniably fascinating, Ryûsei contends, but even an image that possesses no hint of sensuality and that inspires nothing but revulsion can appear intensely beautiful to an insightful viewer. In "The Consideration of Decadence," he defined *grotesquerie* (Jpn: *gurotesuku* グロテスク) in this paradoxical way:

> *From the beginning, what we call grotesque is the feeling of ghastliness, bizarreness and fear as opposed to beauty, but when fine art evolves, it borrows something that is antithetical to beauty and thereby implies an even deeper beauty.*[73]

As he had distinguished between *artistic decadence* and *decadent art*, Ryûsei likewise emphasized the subtle difference between uncomfortable images that ultimately reveal to persistent viewers their inherent beauty and those that provoke nothing more than feelings of disgust:

> *... this sense of mystery, this fresh feeling, a kind of disgusting beauty – there is a truly delicate distinction between these things and diseased ugliness. The ability to detect this dangerous distinction and not make that single step too far is an unusual ability... [but] it is not difficult for a talented artist.*[74]

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[73] Kishida Ryûsei, "Dekadansu no kôsatsu," 216.
[74] Ibid, 218-19.

Two works that Ryûsei felt strongly evoked the profound beauty of grotesquerie were Yan Hui's portraits of Hanshan and Shide,[75] which became well documented sources of inspiration for Ryûsei's own works, particularly his portraits of his daughter. While many monographs have discussed how Ryûsei's Reiko series illustrates his concept of *uchi naru bi* 内なる美 (inner beauty),[76] the way this series reflects his ideas on decadence, ***hikinbi*, *derori***, grotesquerie, and, by extension, his interest in eccentric artists such as Matabei, has received far less attention.

The Transmogrification of Reiko

Ryûsei painted portraits of his daughter Kishida Reiko from April 1914 until sometime between June and December of 1929,[77] and while monographs have discussed the way in which the style of these portraits "passed beyond mere realism,"[78] few have discussed the shockingly systematic nature of how the artist transformed the image of his daughter. When analyzing the works, one can easily perceive distinct stylistic trends that, at the risk of interpreting the series teleologically, might be considered to be developmental stages: realistic depictions of Reiko, deformation of her head and arms, depiction of her as twins, images of her as Hanshan and Shide, and portraits of her as a Daoist immortal. With few exceptions, Ryûsei develops the portrait series in this

[75] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, v. 3, 106 (March 23, 1922).
[76] One relatively recent example is Sonobe Yûsaku 薗部雄作. *Kishida Ryûsei to gendai* 『岸田劉生と現代』 (Tokyo: Rikkasha, 2003), particularly 132-72.
[77] "Portrait of Reiko (Reiko at Age Five)," dated October 8th, 1918 has often been incorrectly cited as Ryûsei's first portrait of Reiko. SeeTakashina, 92. In fact, Ryûsei had painted several portraits of Reiko from the time that she was only a few days old. See Fukuyama bijutsukan 福山美術館. *Kishida Ryûsei Reiko-ten* 『岸田劉生・麗子展』. (Fukuyama: Fukuyama bijutsukan, 2003), 18-21.
[78] Koike, 26. Translation by Margaret Miller Kanada.

chronological order, and for this reason, the series itself is visual evidence of his evolving understanding about the genre of eccentric art.

Ryûsei's earliest portraits of Reiko number among some of the most strictly realist works in his oeuvre. Admittedly, "Portrait of Reiko (Reiko at Age Five)" includes imaginative additions such as the architecture surrounding her, inscribed with her name and details about the painting, as well as the small thistle blossom that she holds, a motif that Ryûsei borrowed from the works of Dürer, one of his favorite European painters.[79] (Figure 231.) The appearance of Reiko's face, on the other hand, closely resembles a photograph of her that was taken six months before the painting was completed (Figure 232), indicating that Ryûsei may have used the photograph as a visual reference. Even in a work produced the following year, the artist's efforts to represent his daughter's appearance as naturalistically as possible are obvious, and the only elements in the painting that allude to a narrative beyond that simple, anatomical reality are her clothing and a still-life object laying inconspicuously in the corner of the composition (Figure 233).

Beginning around the end of 1919 and early 1920, when he first expressed in his diary an interest in the "mysterious beauty" of classical Chinese and Japanese art,[80] Ryûsei seemed to reconsider the value of academically realist painting. This change was certainly not motivated by the belief that such a realist style was too restrictive; rather than experimenting with a wide variety of compositional arrangements, the artist imposed upon himself even more limitations. From this point onward, the vast majority of

[79] Takashina, 92.
[80] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 1, 320 (May 2, 1920).

portraits depicting Reiko show her body pointed towards the viewer and her head turned approximately fifteen degrees to the viewer's right. (Figures 234-235.) While endlessly repeating this format, Ryûsei then began to gradually deform the shape of his model's head, stretching it horizontally until the back of her hair gracefully led the viewer's eye down along the outer edge of her right arm. At the same time, the artist gradually narrowed the width of her arms, which seemed all the leaner in comparison to her expanding head. The artist himself never provided any explicit explanation for these changes, but in consideration of the fact that he had become interested in ukiyo-e artists such as Suzuki Harunobu, Moronobu, and Matabei by March 1921, it is safe to conclude that these changes were at least partly inspired by the stylized physiques of ukiyo-e beauties (*bijin*).

At the same time as he altered the appearance of Reiko's head and arms, the artist began to combine multiple depictions of her within the same image. This development in the series may have been prompted by the still-lifes that Ryûsei had made before Reiko's birth. In "Three Apples," the artist lines up several fruits on a dark table, and although each of them has unique blemishes, their equidistant positions on the canvas and their lack of clearly defined shadows creates the impression that they may be nothing more than different views of a single object. (Figure 236.)

The first double portrait of Reiko seems to have begun as a depiction of the child holding a doll. (Figure 237.) In the image, the child sits docilely with her legs folded beneath her and her face reveals little expression; the small doll she holds in the palm of her left hand seems at least as animated as her. At approximately the same time, Ryûsei

used this image in a woodblock print intended as a book cover design for a publication by the novelist Mushanokoji Saneatsu 武者小路実篤 (1885 – 1976).[81] Since, as a book cover, only half of the overall design could be seen at a time, the artist presumably decided to use a second image of his daughter for the back cover, and when the cover sheet was laid flat, the two figures appeared to be sitting side by side. (Figure 238.) In the following years, he gradually individualized the two images of Reiko until finally he showed them interacting as if they were twin sisters. (Figure 239.)

Ryûsei's subsequent decision to transform his multiple images of Reiko into the likeness of Hanshan and Shide was not an entirely unexpected development since the Tang monks have been described as either twins or dual manifestations of a single character.[82] The artist's first mention of Hanshan appears in his diary entry for March 23, 1922:

> *About the motif that has been on my mind for the last few days, the one that the grotesque quality of Yan Hui's painting of Hanshan inspired in me, yesterday I was looking at it with [the novelist] Nagayo Yoshirô [1888-1961], and others. We talked about it and the idea kept growing, and I finally started feeling that I'd rather do this after all. There was a perfect size canvas available so I offered to start on it immediately. I brought a photographic plate of Yan Hui's painting to my side, and I started drawing, half copying the composition.*[83]

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[81] Fukuyama bijutsukan, 51.
[82] A relatively recent example of this interpretation of Hanshan and Shide is Etô Shun, "Kanzan Jittoku: fûkyô no sôshitachi." In Tochigi kenritsu hakubutsukan 栃木県立博物館. *Kanzan Jittoku: egakareta fûkyô no soshitachi daishijurokkai kikakuten* 『寒山拾得：描かれた風狂の祖師たち第 46 回企画展』. Utsunomiya: Tochigi kenritsu hakubutsukan, 1994.), 6.
[83] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 3, 106 (March 23, 1922). As reprinted in Takashina, 160. Translated by Atsushi Tanaka.

"Little Girl" (*Yadôjo* 「野童女」), the work that Ryûsei mentions beginning on this day and that he completed two months later, was yet another portrait of Reiko, and as confirmed by a visual comparison, he indeed modeled the girl's arm gestures, the tilt of her head, and her facial features on Yan Hui's portrait of Shide.[84] (Figures 240-241.) The sources of influence evident in this work, however, are more complex than Ryûsei's diary implies. With its bleak lighting, the mood of this work seems far less indebted to Yan Hui's scroll than to the nightmarish Black Paintings of Goya (Figures 242-243), an artist who Ryûsei publicly hailed mere weeks after the completion of this painting as an exemplar of *decadent art*.[85] Furthermore, in the pain-staking attention to detail in Reiko's kimono, one can clearly see evidence of Ryûsei's obsession with the textile patterns depicted in ukiyo-e paintings, particularly those attributed to Matabei such as the Hikone Screen (Figures 217-220).

After having abandoned oil paint for nihonga materials in the following months, Ryûsei produced another, far more chromatically subdued but equally disturbing image of his daughter in the guise of Hanshan. In the way that Reiko directly faces the viewer and distorts her face into a vulgar smile, this portrait appears to have been loosely based upon Yan Hui's image of Hanshan. (Figures 244-245.) Otherwise, however, Ryûsei's work is quite unique: standing in a blighted landscape, the child clutches a small dish of fruits in her left hand and makes a cryptic gesture with her right hand. Technically, this

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[84] Ryûsei's statement in his diary echoes the inscription on the left side of this work: "By Kishida Ryûsei from a study of a portrait of Hanshan by Yan Hui" 学顔輝筆寒山図岸田劉生写之 See Kishida Ryûsei. *Kishida Ryûsei-ten: Seitan 110-nen* 『岸田劉生展：生誕 110 年』. (Tokyo: Tokyo shinbun, 2001), 132.
[85] Kishida Ryûsei, "Dekadansu no kosatsu," 214. "Dekadansu no kosatsu" was originally published in *Junsei Bijutsu* 『純正美術』, June 1922. Ibid, 219.

painting pales in comparison to the artist's earlier work, but its lack of refinement does not indicate that Ryûsei had "started turning out quantities of Japanese-style paintings to sell," as some critics have charged.[86] In order to imbue this painting with a mystical sense of *hikinbi*, rather, Ryûsei avoided using painting techniques that were based upon conventional aesthetics, and according to his writings, if the work appears to be unfinished or unsuccessful, such a judgment primarily reflects the viewer's inability to appreciate the elusive beauty of *hikinbi*.

When discussing Ryûsei's Reiko series, many monographs overlook those works produced after 1923 with the possible exception of "Portraits of Reiko at the Age of Sixteen" (Figures 246-247), which are believed to conclude the series.[87] In terms of their materials, color range, amount of detail, fidelity to nature, mood, and underlying aesthetics, these portraits are a return to Ryûsei's original, realist style; even the titles of the works and the red borders painted along the edges of the canvases hearken back to one of the artist's first depictions of her (Figure 231). Some might view these works as evidence of Ryûsei's ultimate realization that his greatest asset as an artist was his ability to produce western-style oil paintings. Such an interpretation, however, ignores the particular circumstances that inspired Ryûsei to paint these works. They were intended as homages to his daughter on her sixteenth birthday (Figure 248), portraits designed to please an individual who, as seen in her own self-portraits, possessed a deep appreciation for realist painting (Figure 249). These final two portraits of Reiko therefore do not

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[86] Koike, 25. Translation by Margaret Miller Kanada.
[87] Fukuyama Museum refers to these two portraits as the last in the Reiko series. Fukuyama bijutsukan, 116. Those monographs that overlook Ryûsei's last Reiko portraits include Hijikata, *Kishida Ryûsei.*

express Ryûsei's late aesthetic beliefs, and although they are skillfully executed portraits, in a discussion of those beliefs, they are worthy of only cursory mention. In order to understand the direction in which Ryûsei's Reiko series truly developed, one must focus upon those portraits produced during his residence in Kyoto and his first two years in Kamakura.

Portraits of Reiko and Hanshan during Ryûsei's Late Period

Ryûsei's depictions of Hanshan and Shide led to frequent discussions between the artist and his friends about the religious, philosophical, and art historical significance underlying the portraits. In May 1922, the *tanka* poet Kinoshita Rigen (1886-1925) sent to Ryûsei a postcard displaying Kanô Sansetsu's famous painting of the Tang monks.[88] (Figure 250.) Shortly thereafter, a priest from Enkaku-ji temple visited Ryûsei's home and talked with him extensively about Hanshan's poetry.[89] Such information seems to have further fueled Ryûsei's interest in Hanshan and Shide, leading him to paint portraits of them in which references to Reiko are almost completely absent.

"Feeling Is Detachment" (*Shinjô mushin* 心情無心; Figure 251), which dates to circa 1923,[90] reveals Ryûsei's awareness of the way in which Hanshan and Shide were depicted in comical parodies (*mitate*) during the Edo period. Like this work, in which the hermits are represented as toddlers, "Parody of 'The Four Sleepers'" (*Mitate shisui-zu* 見

[88] Rigen's postcard was postmarked May 28, 1922. Fukuyama bijutsukan, 73.
[89] Kishida Ryûsei, Ryûsei nikki, vol. 3, 274 (August 5, 1922).
[90] "Feeling Is Detachment" is listed as an undated work, but based upon the upper seal, which also appears on his painting "White Dog" (Figure 49), the work can most likely be dated to circa 1923. A reproduction of this work can be found in Kyôto shi bijutsukan, 101.

立四睡図) by Toshika としか (active circa mid 19th century) presents the image of a courtesan, symbolizing Fenggan, napping at her desk, while two young children and a cat, symbolizing Hanshan, Shide, and Fenggan's tiger, respectively, curl up at her feet. (Figures 252-253.) More importantly, however, this work by Ryûsei (Figure 251) indicates the artist's early understanding of the religious significance of Hanshan and Shide. The title, a quote from "The Heart Sutra" (*Hannya-kyô* 般若經), places the Tang monks in a clearly Buddhist context, and presumably they are meant to be viewed as incarnations of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva (Fugen Bosatsu) and Manjusri Bodhisattva (Monju Bosatsu).

Despite this initial interpretation of Hanshan and Shide as Buddhist figures, evidence suggests that Ryûsei eventually came to view them in the context of religious Daoism. From the first known reference to religious Daoism in Ryûsei's writings, Hanshan and Shide are discussed along with quintessentially Daoist immortals. In his diary entry for May 5, 1922, he describes painting in his studio together with his friend Mr. Shiina 椎名, and while he himself produced one of his images of Hanshan and Shide, Ryûsei mentions, Shiina painted portraits of Liu Haichan and the Zen Buddhist exemplar Budai (布袋, Jpn: Hotei).[91] The following year, Ryûsei wrote a treatise on traditional Japanese theater, *The Aesthetics of Kabuki*, in which he states:

> *What we call beauty ought to be the opposite of vulgarity, and though one would assume that, in crude images, one could find only ugliness, what I describe here as "the aesthetics of vulgarity"* [gehin no bi] *is, in fact, a sense of beauty that appears a bit vulgar. This sensibility is mainly found in Asian*

[91] Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 3, 161-2.

> *art and it manifests itself in forms that do not display ordinary beauty but rather a beauty that is pregnant with hidden meaning. This also pertains to the aura of characters in Chinese painting such as Hanshan, Shide, Budai [Jpn: Hotei 布袋, the god of good fortune], and Liu Haichan.*[92]

Indications of an interest in religious Daoism can be found in Ryûsei's works as early as 1920, when he designed a cover-page illustration for his book *Ryûsei's Collected Works and Views on Art* (*Ryûsei gashu oyobi geijutsu-kan* 『劉生画集及芸術観』). In this image, a gazebo, indicated by nothing more than a trapezoid supported by four vertical lines, stands in a deserted landscape, and in the center of this structure, Reiko sits gazing out at the landscape, her legs folded beneath her and her hands resting in her lap (Figure 254). The meaning of this image becomes clear when comparing it to a self-portrait produced by the artist several years later, in which Ryûsei presents himself in a similar environment (Figure 255). The title for this work, written across the top and left side, is "Tôgaan Hermitage" (*Tôgaan shûjin kankyo no zu* 「塘芽庵主人閑居之図」).[93] The image therefore represents Ryûsei's idealized fantasy of living in seclusion.

Other works by Ryûsei indicate that these references to eremitism have specifically Daoist meaning. In 1921, Ryûsei further developed the image that depicts Reiko as a hermit, producing a cover illustration for Mushanokoji Saneatsu's "Dramas for Children" as well as a hanging scroll (Figures 256-257). In these works, which are based on pictorial theme of "Chinese children at play" (*karako yûgi-zu* 唐子遊戯図), a

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[92] Kishida Ryûsei. *Kabuki biron* 『歌舞伎美論』. (Tokyo: Hayagawa Shobô, 1948), 87-88.

[93] A photograph of this work can be found in Tokyo kokuritsu kindai bijutsukan, 80. On the meaning of the term Tôgaan, see Higashi Shunro 東俊郎. "Kishida Ryûsei no nikki o yomu" 「岸田劉生の日記を読む」. Kenkyû ronshû 『研究論集』, no.4 (March 2005): 106-71.

group of boys and girls stand in an open field and pass the time wrestling, juggling, chatting, and playing musical instruments. Separated from them in the upper left corner of the image, Reiko sits in her gazebo and writes at her desk, her only form of companionship being a white dog that lays in front of the structure (Figures 258-259). The images of the dog are based upon a painting by the Southern Song Dynasty painter Li Di 李迪 (Jpn: Riteki; active ca. 1163 – 1197), and although the current location of Li's work is unknown,[94] a photograph of the work[95] indicates that it is very similar to "Hunting Dog," a work by the same painter currently in the Beijing Palace Museum (Figure 260). Perhaps an even closer likeness to Li's white dog is a copy that Ryûsei eventually made in 1923 after his unsuccessful attempts to acquire the work.[96] (Figure 261.) Ryûsei's copy is a mirror image of Li's original, and the only major change that Ryûsei made was the omission of several small pups which, in Li's work, gather in front of the white dog, apparently their mother, to be nursed.

In his essay *Concerning Figure Painting of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, written in 1924, Ryûsei claims that this image by Li Di[97] is strongly representative of Song and Yuan painting due to an attribute it possesses that the author refers to as *sen* 仙: a state of

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[94] Li's painting was formerly included in the Akaboshi 赤星 collection. See Kishida Ryûsei, *Kishida Ryûsei zenshû*, vol. 3, 229, as quoted in Higashi. The painting may currently be in the Okazaki Tôkô collection. See Shibun Kaku shuppan 思文閣出版 (ed.), *Sogenga meihin zuroku: Okazaki Tôkô korekushon fu Okazaki Tôkô abura e* 宋元画名品図録 ： 岡崎桃乞コレクション 付岡崎桃乞油絵. (Tokyo: Shibun Kaku shuppan, 1978).

[95] A small photograph of Li's work can be found in Kishida Ryûsei, *Kishida Ryûsei ten* (Tokuyama shi bijutsu hakubutsukan, 2000), 10. Unfortunately, however, the poor quality of this image does not warrant including it among the illustrations here.

[96] The diary entry for October 14, 1922 in Kishida Ryûsei, *Ryûsei nikki*, vol. 1, 358; as cited in Higashi, 106-71, indicates that as early as this date, Ryûsei was producing copies of this work.

[97] Ryûsei refers to this particular painting as "the image of a dog and her pups by Li Di" 李迪筆狗児図. Kishida Ryûsei, *Sôgen no shaseiga*, 47.

realism so sublime and transcendental that, ironically, the artwork seems at first glance to be childish and nonsensical.[98] As implied by the Chinese character *sen* 仙 itself, which is commonly glossed as ***eremitism*** or ***immortalism***, Ryûsei's theory is fundamentally rooted in religious Daoism. In an extended metaphor, the author equates Chinese painting with Daoist asceticism: just as a hermit can achieve spiritual insight by retreating to a dark, uninhabited area, sacrificing his or her physical health, and living a life of severe austerity, so too can a perceptive viewer find profound beauty in the murky, diseased appearance of Chinese ink painting.[99]

The most tangible indications of Ryûsei's interest in religious Daoism are his portraits of immortals. In one such work from circa 1928, a figure crouches next to a flower vase, raises her arms above her head, and flashes a grotesque smile at the viewer (Figure 262). At the top of the painting, the artist has written the title, "A Long Life to the Age of Seven Hundred."[100] Although the figure bears some resemblance to Han Xiangzi, Lan Caihe, and He Xiangu, the lack of iconographic details implies that Ryûsei intended the transcendent to be generic and anonymous.

Depictions of Hanshan and Shide made by Ryûsei during these last few years of his life differ profoundly from those he produced in the early 1920s. The changes are more than stylistic: the artist appears to have reconsidered both the historical and theological identities of the characters. One such image refers to a narrative in which the

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[98] Ibid, 46-47. Other references to *sen* include Kishida Ryûsei, *Shoki nikuhitsu ukiyo-e*, 33.
[99] Kishida Ryûsei, *Sôgen no shaseiga*, 46.
[100] A photograph of the painting can be found in Kishida Ryûsei. *Kishida Ryûsei ten*. (Tokyo: Tokyo shinbun, 1970), pl. 39. The piece is listed as an undated work, but based upon the seal, which also appears in "Tôgaan Hermitage" (Figure 43), it can likely be dated to circa 1928.

Tang monks are traditionally represented: Hanshan writes one of his poems on a tree, boulder, or cliff face, while Shide either reclines and watches in admiration or prepares additional ink on a nearby boulder. An image that is relatively faithful to the conventions of this narrative is Nagasawa Rosetsu's "Figure Painting" (Figure 263). Ryûsei's version differs in several subtle but significant aspects. Rather than writing his poetry, Hanshan paints the image of a butterfly. (Figures 264-265.) In this way, Ryûsei re-envisions the legendary eccentric as a visual artist, a possible reference to himself or to his artistic role models, Bada Shanren and Iwasa Matabei. Furthermore, Ryûsei omits any indication of the natural objects surrounding the monks, and he depicts the figures with no more detail than the butterfly, suggesting that Hanshan might in fact be magically creating an animate, three-dimensional life-form with a few simple strokes of his brush. Such an ability seems to be less connected with the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Manjusri than with Daoist immortals such as Han Xiangzi, who possessed the ability to instantly conjure up a bouquet of uniquely colored flowers.[101]

Another two-fold screen depicting Hanshan and Shide, ostensibly painted the same year,[102] also implies a strong connection with Daoism (Figure 266). The hermits are again presented in the same narrative, and although this time Hanshan is clearly

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[101] Jing, Anning. "The Eight Immortals: The Transformation of T'ang and Sung Taoist Eccentrics during the Yuan Dynasty." In Hearn, Maxwell K. and Judith K. Smith, ed.. *Arts of the Sung and Yüan: Papers Prepared for an International Symposium Organized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Conjunction with the Exhibition Splendors of Imperial China: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei.* (New York: Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 218. See also Lai, T. C.. *The Eight Immortals*. (Hong Kong: Swindon Book Company, 1972), 19.

[102] This painting is listed as an undated work, but based upon the seals, which also appear on Ryûsei's other Hanshan-Shide screen (Figure 52) and on "Accumulating the Five Happinesses" (*Go fukushô shû* 「五福祥集」), both of which were produced in January 1928, the work can most likely be dated to this time. A reproduction of this work can be found in Kishida Ryûsei. *Kishida Ryûsei ten*. (Tokyo: Tokyo shinbun, 1970), plate 41.

shown writing or painting on the remains of a tree trunk, the appearance of his round face is almost identical to that of the nameless immortal in "A Long Life to the Age of Seven Hundred" (Figures 267-268). Both figures display simple hairstyles characteristic of the Tang dynasty, they look directly at the viewer beneath drooping eyelids, and they smile in a vulgar manner that hints at their mental instability. The simplicity of these portraits imply that Ryûsei is not interested in describing particular individuals but rather mythic archetypes. If so, then these two characters, along with Shide, essentially share the same identity, that of a Daoist immortal.

Although Ryûsei's interest in religious Daoism and *sen* developed several years after he had proposed his other theories on the aesthetics of eccentric art, nevertheless all of those theories are useful in discussing not only his own work from 1921 onwards but also that of the Edo painters and printmakers who Tsuji Nobuo and the other art historians discussed in Chapter One have labeled as eccentrics. These scholars described idiosyncratic artwork as reflections of the artists' aberrant personalities and styles. Underlying their analyses was an assumption about a kind of generally accepted, conventional aesthetic from which these individualistic artists chose to diverge. None of those scholars, however, attempted to offer a hypothesis about the alternative aesthetic beliefs that motivated these artists. As a result, the artists appear to be motivated by nothing more than blind defiance. By contrast, Ryûsei's theories, particularly that of *sen*, upon which the discussion of Daoist eccentricity in this thesis has been based, interprets these artists as pioneers pursuing a less apparent but equally valid form of beauty.

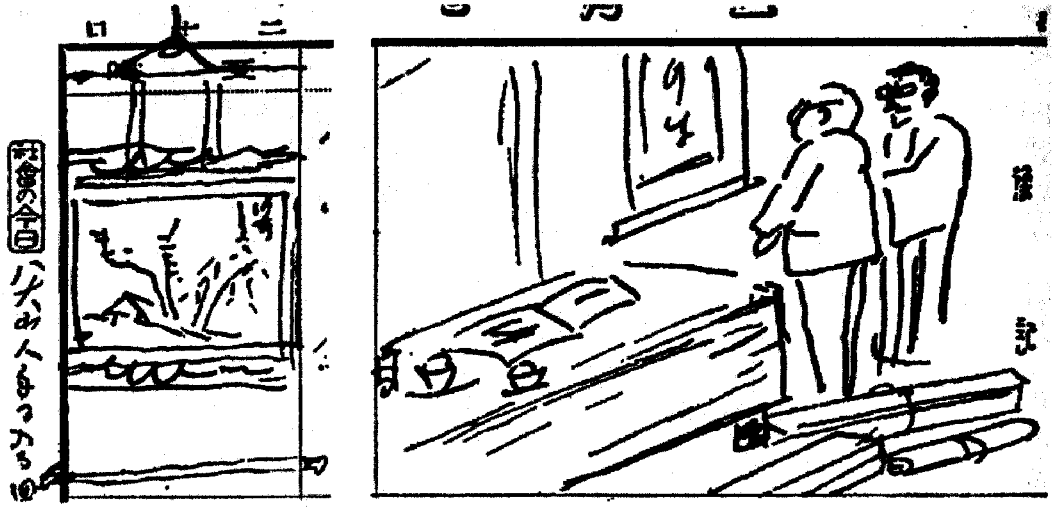

Figure 213. Kishida Ryûsei, diary sketches from March 1923, probably depicting (on right side) Ryûsei and Mr. Takazoe discussing works in Takazoe's collection. On left side, a depiction of a painting by Bada Shanren mounted as a hanging scroll, probably the work Takazoe gave to Ryûsei.

Figure 214. Bada Shanren, "Landscapes," detail: leaf D; ca. 1702-03, ink and light color on satin, album of eight leaves, Honolulu Academy of Arts.

Figure 215. Kishida Ryûsei, "Spring Begins in Eastern Kyoto," 1923-26, color on paper, 46.3 x 34.4 cm, private collection.

Figure 216. Kishida Ryûsei, diary sketch from December 1923 depicting Ryûsei visiting Kottôya gallery and looking at a folding screen attributed to Iwasa Matabei.

Figure 217. Unidentified artist, "Hikone screen," between 1624 and 1644, six-fold screen, remounted as individual panels; ink, color, and gold leaf on paper; each panel 94 x 48 cm; Ii Naoyoashi, Hikone, Shiga Prefecture. National Treasure.

Figure 218. Unidentified artist, "Hikone screen," detail: conversing figures, as depicted in right section.

Figure 219. Unidentified artist, "Hikone screen," detail: woman dictating a speech, as depicted in central section.

Figure 220. Unidentified artist, "Hikone screen," detail: musician, people playing go, and Chinese-style folding screen, as depicted in left section.

Figure 221. Kishida Ryûsei, "Reiko Playing the Shamisen," January 28, 1923, oil on canvas, 40.7 x 31.5 cm, National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto.

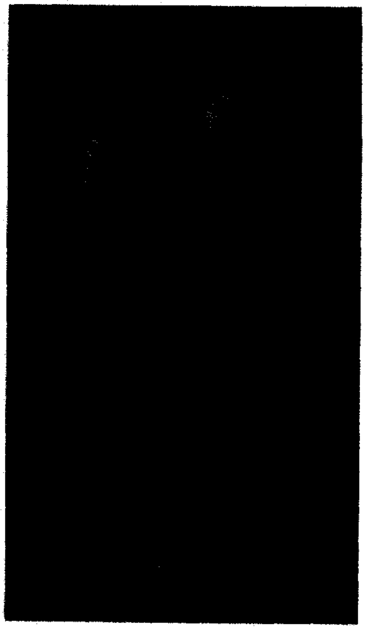

Figure 222. Kishida Ryûsei, "Dancing Girl," March 7, 1924, oil on canvas, 91.0 x 53.1 cm, Ôhara Museum of Art, Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture.

Figure 223. Unidentified artist, “Male and Female Dancers,” detail: left panel; 1661-73, color and ink on paper, two-panel folding screen, size and location unknown.

Figure 224. Suzuki Harunobu, “Amorous Overtones,” circa 1767-68, woodblock print (nishiki-e), ink and color on paper, 20.9 x 28.8 cm (chûban), Museum of Fine Art, Boston.

Figure 225. Yamamura Toyonari, "Ichikawa Danshirô II as Henmei Tesshinai," 1919, ink and color on paper, oban (37.8 x 25.8 cm), private collection.

Figure 226. Hishikawa Moronobu, "A Young Man Dallying with a Courtesan," late 17th century, woodblock print, ink on paper, 26 x 36.8 cm (ôban), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 227. Torii Kiyonobu I, "Lady Sannomiya," late 17th century – early 18th century, woodblock print, ink and color on paper, 36.8 x 26 cm (ôban), private collection.

Figure 228. Hishikawa Moronobu, "The Tale of Oeyama," detail: Yorimitsu and his Retainers Decapitate Shutendoji, circa 1681–1688, woodblock print, ink on paper, 27.2 x 34.6 cm (ôban), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 229. Torii Kiyonobu I, "Three Actors in an Unidentified Play: Ikushima Shingoro, Yamanaka Heikuro and Nakamura Gentarô," ca. 1700–1708, woodblock print, ink on paper with hand-applied color, 31.6 x 15.2 cm (hosoban), MFA, Boston.

Figure 230. Unidentified artist, "Bathhouse Girls," 17th century, color on paper, hanging scroll, 72.5 x 80.1 cm, Atami Museum of Art. Important Cultural Property.

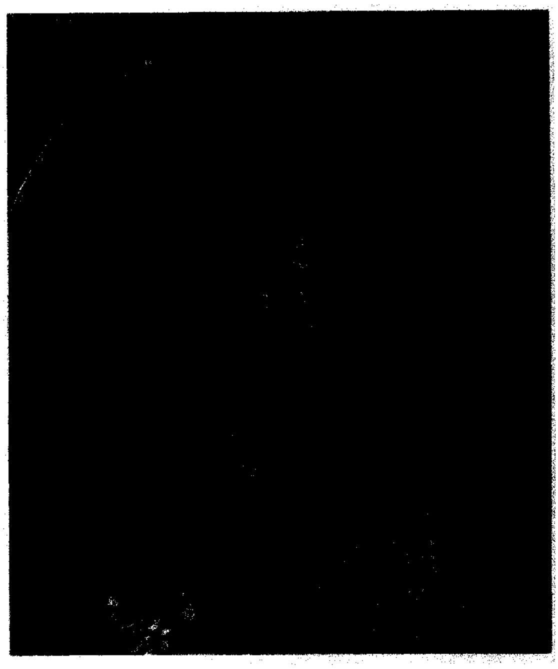

Figure 231. Kishida Ryûsei, "Portrait of Reiko (Reiko at Age Five)," October 8, 1918, oil on canvas, 45.3 x 38.0 cm, Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art.

Figure 232. Photograph of Kishida Reiko, circa April 10, 1918.

Figure 233. Kishida Ryûsei, "Seated Reiko (Wearing a Shibori-Style Kimono)," August 23, 1919, oil on canvas, 72.5 x 60.4 cm, Pola Museum of Art, Hakone City.

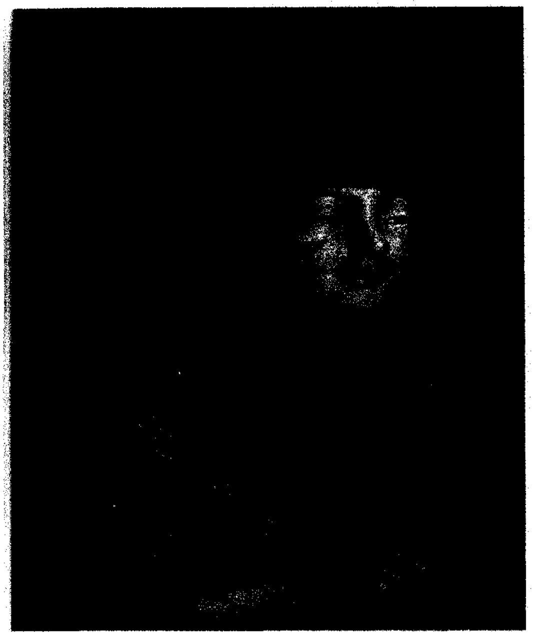

Figure 234. Kishida Ryûsei, "Smiling Reiko (Holding a Fruit)," October 15, 1921, oil on canvas, 46.0 x 38.0 cm, Tokyo National Museum.

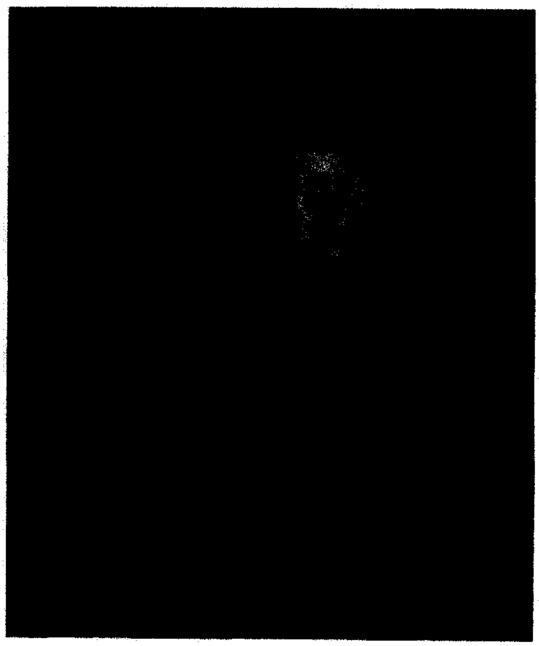

Figure 235. Kishida Ryûsei, "A Little Girl (Standing Reiko)," April 15, 1923, oil on canvas, 53.2 x 45.5 cm, Kamakura Museum of Modern Art.

Figure 236. Kishida Ryûsei, "Three Apples," February 1917, oil on canvas, 31.8 x 41.0 cm, private collection.

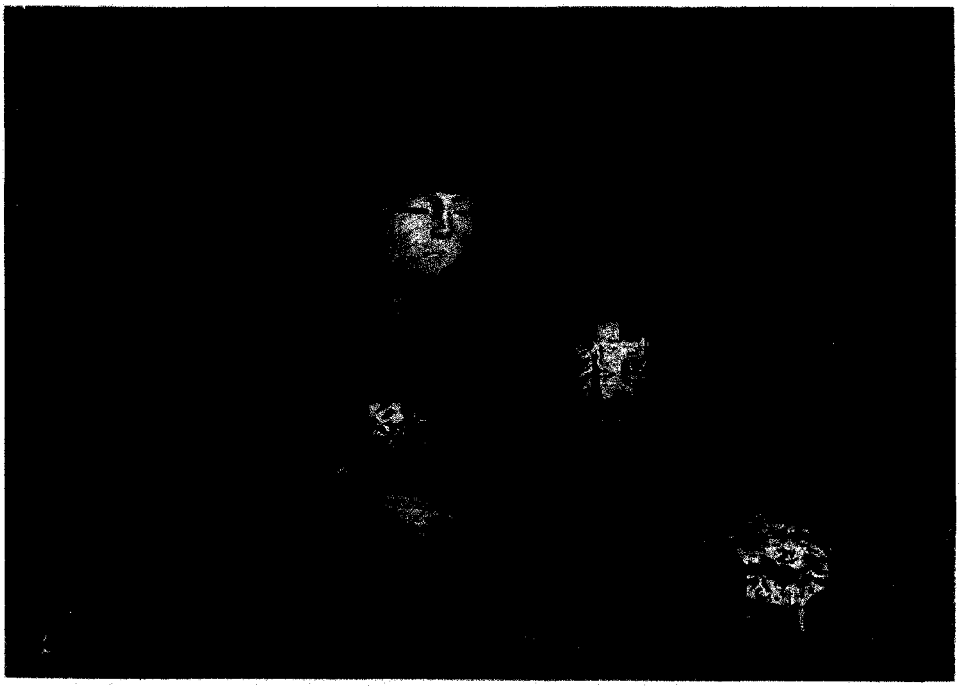

Figure 237. Kishida Ryûsei, "Seated Reiko (Seated Reiko Holding a Doll)," January 28, 1920, watercolor on paper, 34.5 x 47.5 cm, Bridgestone Art Museum, Ishibashi Foundation.

Figure 238. Kishida Ryûsei, Design for cover of *Friendship*, a publication by Mushanokoji Saneatsu, January 1920, woodblock print on paper, 19.2 x 25.4 cm, Collection of Chôfu City Mushanokoji Saneatsu Memorial Hall, Tokyo.

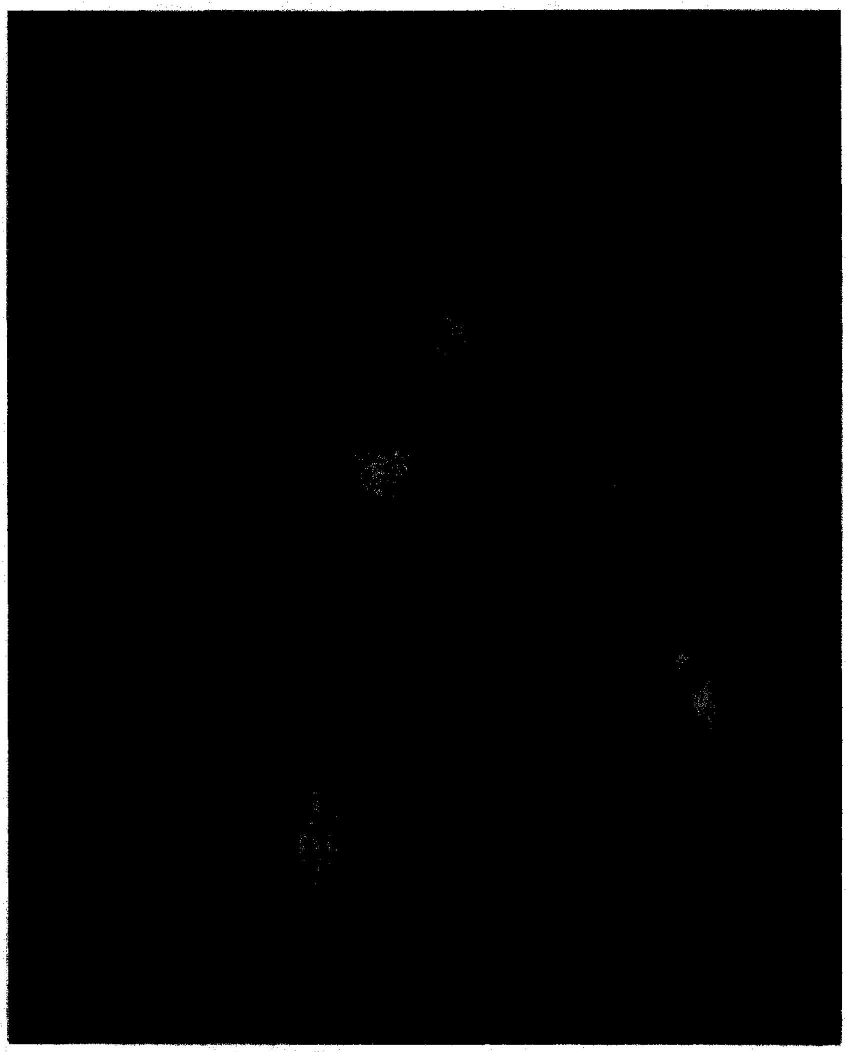

Figure 239. Kishida Ryûsei, "Double Portrait of Reiko (Little Girls Fixing their Hair)," March 21, 1922, oil on canvas, 90.3 x 72.7 cm. Izumiya Museum, Tokyo.

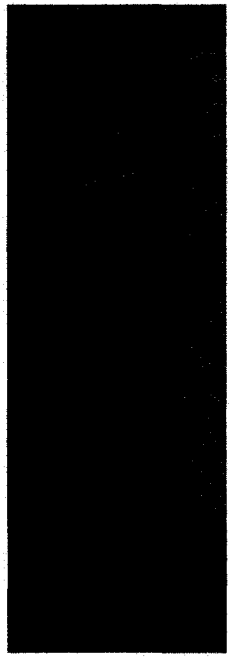

Figure 240. Attributed to Yan Hui, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Shide; 14th century, color on silk, 127.6 x 41.8 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

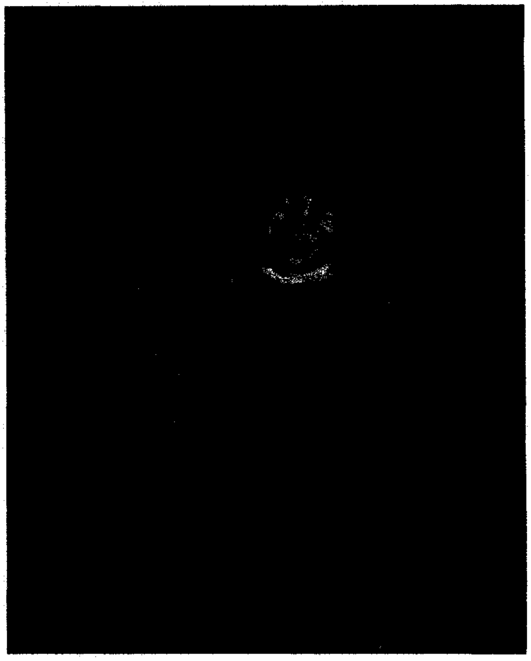

Figure 241. Kishida Ryûsei, "Little Girl," May 20, 1922, oil on canvas, 64.0 x 52.0 cm, private collection.

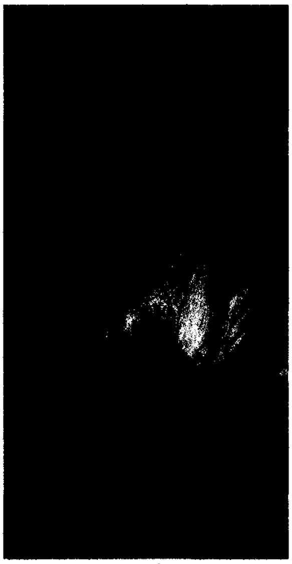

Figure 242. Francisco Goya, "Two Women" ("Two Young People Laughing at a Man"), 1820-23, oil on linen, 125 cm x 65.5, Prado Museum, Madrid.

Figure 243. Francisco Goya, "Two Women," detail: woman's face.

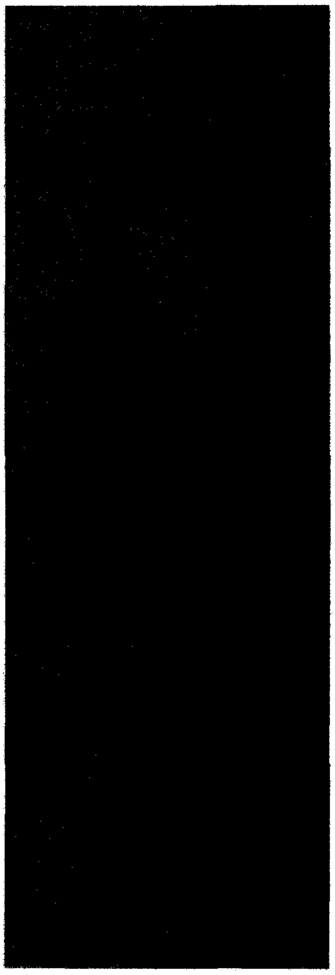

Figure 244. Attributed to Yan Hui, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Hanshan; 14th century, color on silk, pair of hanging scrolls, 127.6 x 41.8 cm. each. Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 245. Kishida Ryûsei, "Portrait of Reiko in the Guise of Hanshan," 1922-23, ink and slight color on paper, 62.5 x 39.1 cm, Kasama Nichidô Museum, Kasama City, Ibaraki Prefecture.

Figure 246. Kishida Ryûsei, "Portraits of Reiko at Age Sixteen," detail: left half; June 1929, oil on canvas, 45.3 x 23.0 cm, Kasuma Nichidô Museum, Kasama City, Ibaraki Prefecture.

Figure 247. Kishida Ryûsei, "Portraits of Reiko at Age Sixteen," detail: right half; June 1929, oil on canvas, 47.2 x 24.8 cm, Fukuyama Museum of Art, Fukuyama Prefecture.

Figure 248. Photo of Kishida Reiko dressed in celebration of her sixteenth birthday, 1929.

Figure 249. Kishida Reiko, "Self Portrait," 1962, oil on canvas, 46.0 x 39.0 cm, private collection.

Figure 250. Kanô Sansetsu, "Hanshan and Shide," 17th century, ink on paper, 101.5 x 130.5 cm. Collection of Shinshô Gokuraku-ji temple, Kyoto. Printed on a postcard sent by Kinoshita Rigen to Ryûsei on May 28, 1922.

Figure 251. Kishida Ryûsei, "Feeling Is Detachment," circa 1923, color on paper, hanging scroll, 38.3 x 26.2 cm, private collection.

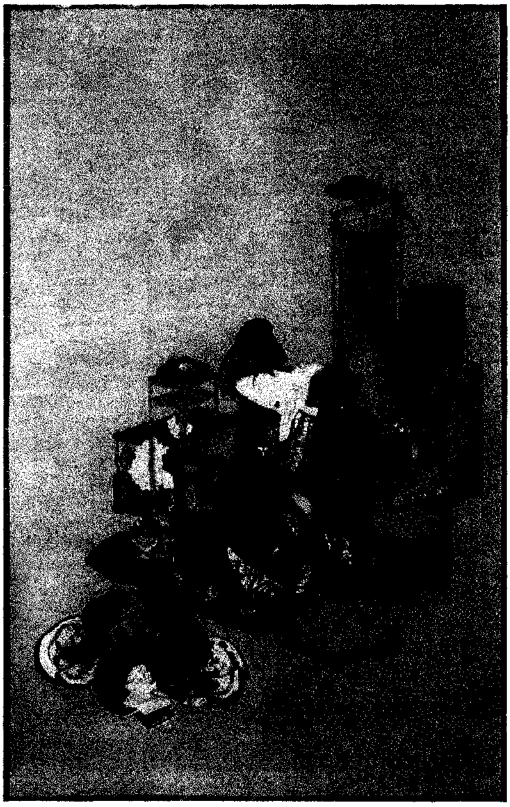

Figure 252. Toshika, "Parody of 'The Four Sleepers,'" 1844, ink and color on paper, hanging scroll, 92.0 x 57.2 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Figure 254. Kishida Ryûsei, Title page of *Ryûsei's Collected Works and Views on Art*, 1920, woodblock print on paper, 30.3 x 20.4 cm, Collection of Chôfu City Mushanokoji Saneatsu Memorial Hall, Tokyo.

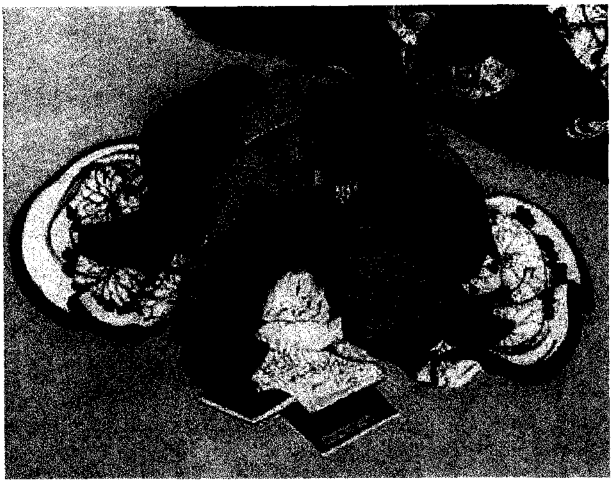

Figure 253. Toshika, "Parody of 'The Four Sleepers,'" detail: Hanshan and Shide.

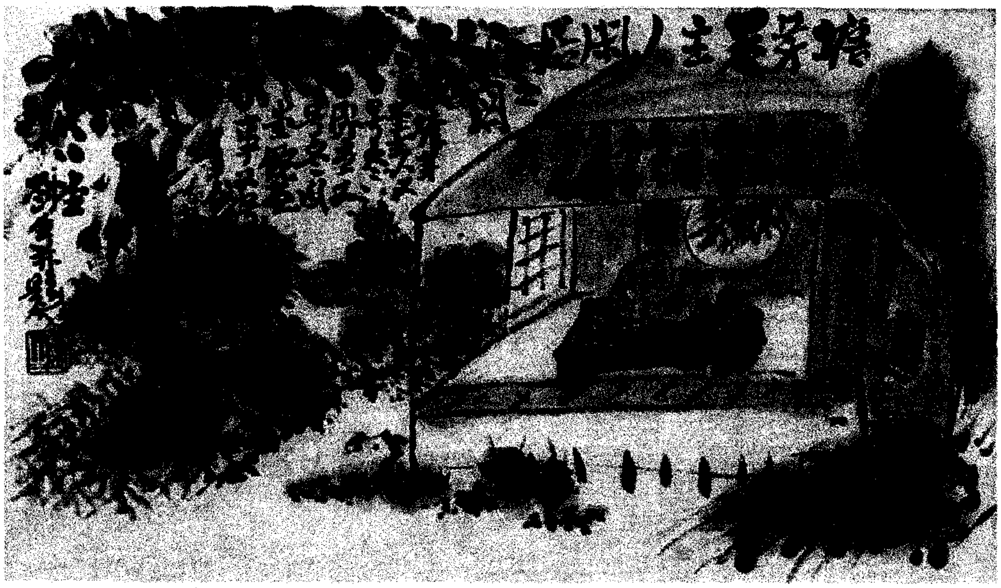

Figure 255. Kishida Ryûsei, "Tôgaan Hermitage," circa 1928, ink and color on paper, 24.3 × 41.8 cm, Kyoto National Museum of Modern Art.

Figure 256. Kishida Ryûsei, Title page of Mushanokoji Saneatsu's book *Three Dramas for Children*, 1921, woodblock print on paper, 20.8 x 30.6 cm, Collection of Chôfu City Mushanokoji Saneatsu Memorial Hall, Tokyo.

Figure 257. Kishida Ryûsei, "Reiko Mandala," 1921, color on paper, 127.2 x 30.0 cm, private collection.

Figure 258. Kishida Ryûsei, Title page of Mushanokoji Saneatsu's book *Three Dramas for Children*, detail: Reiko in sanctuary and dog.

Figure 259. Kishida Ryûsei, "Reiko Mandala," detail: Reiko in sanctuary and dog.

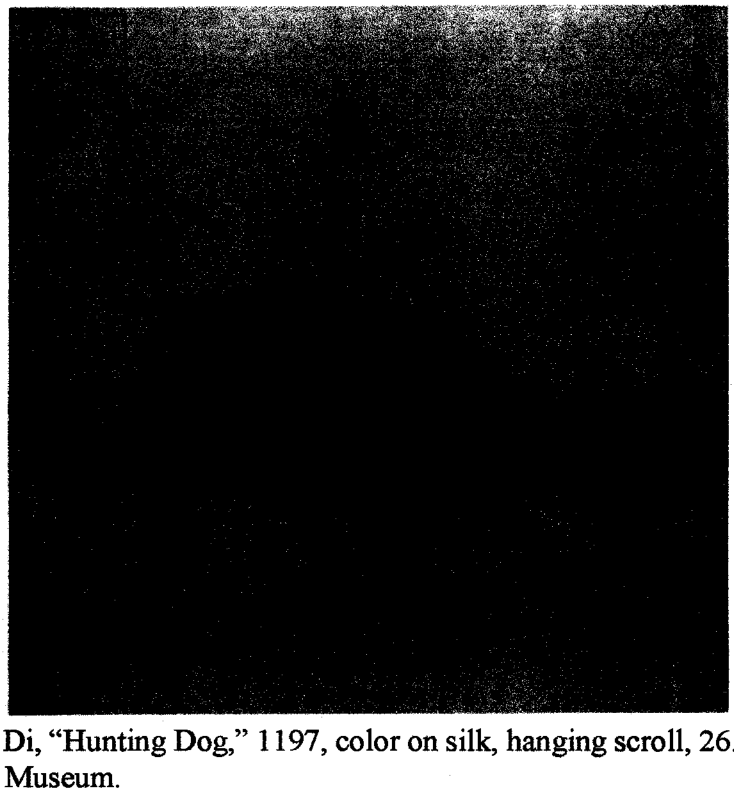

Figure 260. Li Di, "Hunting Dog," 1197, color on silk, hanging scroll, 26.5 × 26.9 cm, Beijing Palace Museum.

Figure 261. Kishida Ryûsei, "White Dog" (copy of painting by Li Di), October 31, 1923, color on paper, 34.5 x 42.2 cm, private collection.

Figure 262. Kishida Ryûsei, "A Long Life to the Age of Seven Hundred," circa 1928, ink on paper, circa 204.0 x 235.5 cm, private collection.

Figure 263. Nagasawa Rosetsu, "Figure Painting," 18th century, ink and slight color on paper, 176.0 x 190.0 cm, Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 264. Kishida Ryûsei, "Hanshan and Shide," January 8, 1928, ink on paper, two-fold screen, 170.0 x 175.0 cm, Tokyo National Museum of Modern Art.

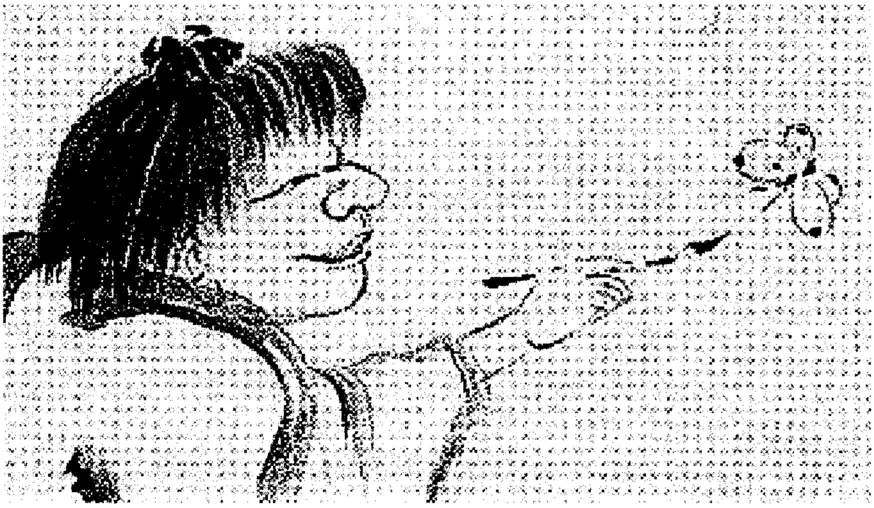

Figure 265. Kishida Ryûsei, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Hanshan.

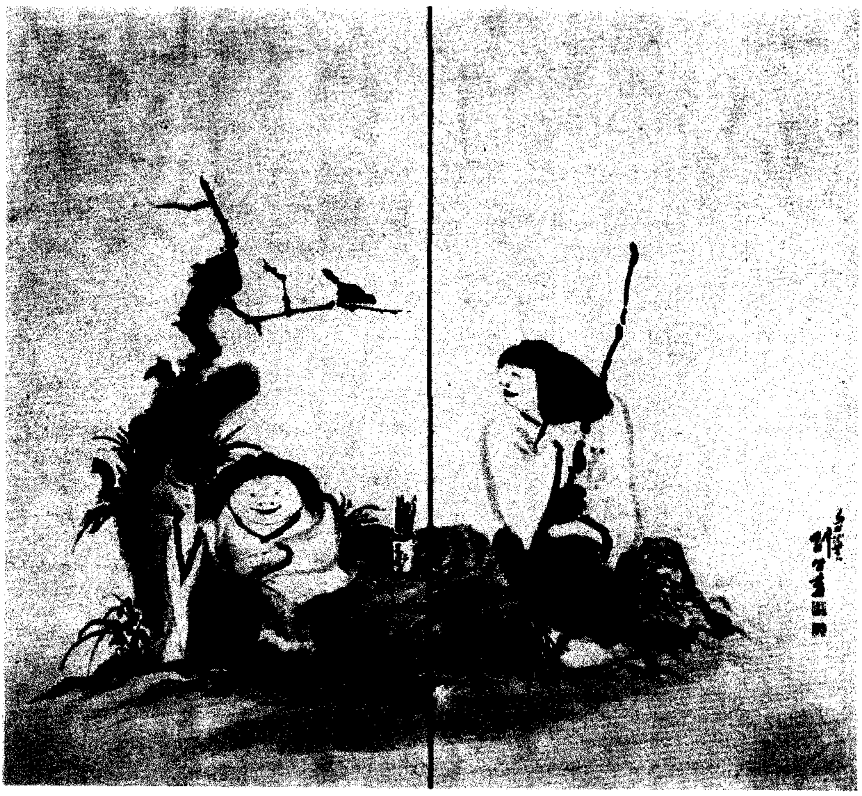

Figure 266. Kishida Ryûsei, “Hanshan and Shide,” circa 1928, ink on paper, two-fold screen, 160.0 x 170.0 cm, private collection.

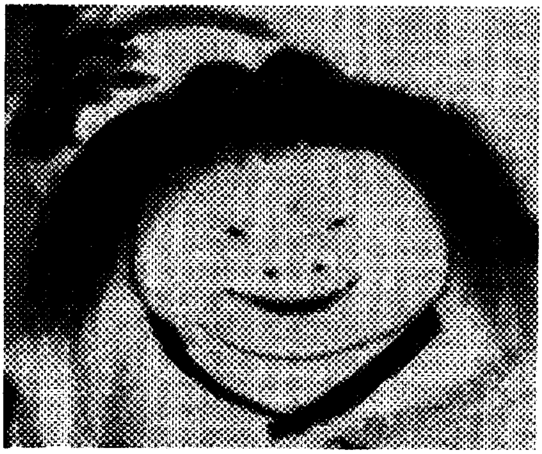

Figure 267. Kishida Ryûsei, “Hanshan and Shide,” undated, detail: Hanshan’s face.

Figure 268. Kishida Ryûsei, “A Long Life to the Age of Seven Hundred,” detail: immortal’s face.

Conclusion

Although the current art historical literature defines the genre of Japanese eccentric art in myriad ways, early discourses on eccentricity in East Asia coupled with the imagery produced by eccentric artists reveal an underlying glorification of idiosyncratic behavior that derives from the practices and narratives of the religious Daoist tradition. Kishida Ryûsei's artwork and art historical writings lend particular insight to the Chinese origins and the Daoist underpinnings of eccentric art as a genre. Unfortunately, the years of warfare and political turmoil that plagued Japan and China during Ryûsei's lifetime and the decades that followed all but eliminated the cultural interaction that had for centuries existed between the nations. As a result, the genre of eccentric art within Japan underwent dramatic and fundamental changes. Nevertheless, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, several contemporary Japanese artists have made efforts to salvage the appearance and at times the underlying ideology of eccentric art, ultimately fusing together into a rather curious pastiche elements of western modernism, art historical interpretations of early modern eccentric art, and indications of the artists' own personal idiosyncrasies.

The *manga* illustrator Akiyama Jôji (秋山ジョージ, b. 1943) was one of the artists to whom Tsuji Nobuo refers in the conclusion of Kisô no keifu, where he states

that "… the most avant-garde artistic production in existence today – comic books, poster art, and murals … share strange similarities [with] these often overlooked artworks of the school of eccentricity…"[1] The work upon which Akiyama's reputation is largely based and that most likely prompted Tsuji's praise is the comic book *Derorin-man* (『デロリンマン』), which portrays a hideous, demonic figure dressed in a shapeless, patchwork robe (Figures 269-270). Kanno Hiroto (菅野洋人, dates unknown) has proposed that Akiyama's character was inspired by Kishida Ryûsei's writings on the aesthetics of eccentric art and was meant to personify Ryûsei's concept of *derori*.[2] While the disturbing appearance of Derorin-man might exemplify Ryûsei's ideas about decadence and grotesquerie, the extent to which Akiyama understood and intentionally alluded to *derori* is questionable. Nevertheless, the character is an interesting example of how Ryûsei's theories may have been disseminated throughout Japanese popular culture.

Less overt allusions to the works of Ryûsei can be found in the paintings of Nara Yoshitomo (奈良美智, b. 1959). Sawaragi Noi (椹木野衣, b. 1962) has noted the stylistic similarities between Nara's and Ryûsei's portraits of young women,[3] and upon comparison, Nara's debt to his predecessor is vividly apparent (Figures 271-272). Much like Reiko, whose head has stretched horizontally and whose arms have withered, the

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[1] Tsuji Nobuo, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 138-9. Tsuji discusses Akiyama in Yajima Arata 矢島新, Yamashita Yûji 山下裕二, Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄. *Nihon bijutsu no hakkenshatachi* 『日本美術の発見者たち』 (Tokyo: Daigaku shuppankai, 2003), 174.
[2] Kanno Hiroto 菅野洋人, "Joron: 'Derori' ni tsuite." In Kôriyama shiritsu bijutsukan 郡山市立美術館. *"Saihakken, Nihon no sugata: kiiwaado wa derori" ten* 『「再発見、日本の姿：キーワードはデロリ」展』. (Kôriyama: Kôriyama shiritsu bijutsukan, 1999), 8-9.
[3] Sawaragi Noi 椹木野衣. "Bijutsu de kyara-moe, kodomo to bijutsu" 「美術でキャラ萌え、こどもと美術」, *Bijutsu techô* 『美術手帖』 53. 813 (December 2001): 103.

head of Nara's child has ballooned into an amoebic shape, and her hands retain little definition beyond the presence of opposable thumbs. Sawaragi describes the work of both artists as "bukimi-kawaii" (不気味かわいい; lit., "disturbing yet cute"), a colloquialism that rose to popularity among young adults in the early 21st century.[4] Ironically, the way in which this term fuses seemingly contradictory qualities closely mirrors Sandy Kita's definition of *derori* as "a repellent but compelling sensuality."[5]

Nara has paid tribute to eccentrics from the early modern era as well. In his 1999 publication *Ukiyo*, the artist appropriated and reinterpreted the imagery of Edo print *(ukiyo-e)* artists. Among them is Utagawa Kuniyoshi's "Famous Locations in the Eastern Capital: Shin Yoshiwara," a landscape in which the halo of the full moon fills a substantial portion of the print (Figure 273). Suzuki Jûzô's 1965 essay "The Eccentricity of Kuniyoshi" discusses this work and cites the artist's extraordinary emphasis upon the moon, an element that is ordinarily treated as little more than a decorative background form, as evidence of Kuniyoshi's "technical eccentricity."[6] Nara's work (Figure 274), whose title, "Full Moon Night," reiterates Suzuki's comments about Kuniyoshi's print, dramatically intensifies the absurdity of the original image. He transforms the moon's halo into the enormous, floating, disembodied head of a young girl, and he buries the head of a passerby beneath a layer of red paint, as if the monstrous head had just decapitated him. A courtesan, upon witnessing this mutilation, screams out, "Blood!"

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[4] Ibid, 103.
[5] Kita, Sandy. *The Last Tosa: Iwasa Katsumochi Matabei, Bridge to Ukiyo-e*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 58-9.
[6] Suzuki Jûzô 鈴木重三, "Kuniyoshi no kisô," 「国芳の奇想」, *Hôshun* 『萌春』 145 (August 1965): 3. See Chapter One for a discussion of Suzuki's essay.

Kuniyoshi's eerie yet tranquil landscape has been re-envisioned as a scene from a campy, violent horror movie.

The Japanese contemporary artist who has arguably displayed the most enthusiasm about the genre of eccentric art is Murakami Takashi (村上隆, b. 1962). In the catalog of his 2000 *Superflat* exhibition, Murakami juxtaposes photos of paintings by Itô Jakuchû, Kanô Sansetsu, Soga Shôhaku, and Kishida Ryûsei beside his own works. In such a context, some of his images reveal a high degree of formal influence by Sansetsu. The stream of white fluid that spans his computer-generated print "Doves and Hawks," for example, in its erratic shape and modulated width, clearly evokes Sansetsu's "Pheasant in a Plum Tree," a work that Murakami writes about extensively in the catalog.[7] (Figures 275-276.)

Murakami's interest in eccentric art has been largely inspired by *Kisô no keifu*. His *Superflat* catalog essay includes quotes from Tsuji's book,[8] and as if in exchange, the following year, Tsuji transcribed in the journal *Bijutsu techô* their conversation about "the lineage of eccentricity" and its contemporary heirs, including Murakami himself.[9] Taking the relatively obscure term *kaikai-kiki* (怪怪奇奇, "extremely strange"), which Tsuji uses repeatedly throughout both *Kisô no keifu* and its sequel, *Kisô no zufu*,[10] the artist invented two of his most popular characters, Kaikai and Kiki (Figure 277). Several

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[7] Murakami Takashi 村上隆. *Superflat* 『スーパーフラット』. Translated by Ted Mack. (Tokyo: Madra Publishing Co., Ltd., 2000), 10-11.
[8] Ibid, 8-9.
[9] Tsuji Nobuo. "*Kisô no keifu* o kumu monotachi" 「『奇想の系譜』を汲む者たち」, *Bijutsu techô* 『美術手帖』 53, No. 812 (November 2001): 46-54.
[10] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi*. (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 48, 92, 137. See also Tsuji Nobuo. *Kisô no zufu: Karakuri, Jakuchû, Kazari* 『奇想の図譜：からくり・若冲・かざり』. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1989), 265.

details in the appearance of these imps are strongly reminiscent of Hanshan and Shide (Figures 278-279): their unusual headdresses evoke the stereotypical hair style of Tang monks, and their grotesque smiles, particularly that of the three-eyed Kiki, convey the same sense of madness as the cackling hermits. Kaikai and Kiki do not possess the religious significance of Hanshan and Shide, however; rather than Daoist eccentricity, they are far more closely aligned with Tsuji's view of "intrinsic, behavioral eccentricity."[11]

For the past several decades, the artist who has been the most able to preserve the pre-modern, theological ideology of eccentricity seems to be the *ankoku butoh* dancer Ohno Kazuo (大野一雄, b. 1906, Figure 280), who celebrates his 100th birthday this year.[12] Ohno was first introduced to the work of Soga Shôhaku shortly after the end of the Pacific War and has since described that discovery as a kind of religious epiphany: "Shôhaku opened me up to the true nature of the universe." Desperately seeking to establish his own reputation as a *kijin*, Ohno has interpreted the "lineage of eccentricity" quite literally, claiming in a 1997 interview to be a distant relative of the painter.[13]

Despite the abstract, ephemeral nature of dance, ample visual evidence indicates that Ohno has choreographed and performed several works that are dedicated solely to

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[11] To my knowledge, this connection between Murakami's two characters and the Tang monks has never been noted in the literature before.

[12] Though, in accordance with the Hebern system of romanization, the Japanese word 舞踏 and the family name 大野 would normally be written as Butô and Ôno, respectively, here they are written instead as Butoh and Ohno, as they are commonly known. See Ohno Kazuo and Ohno Yoshito. *Kazuo Ohno's World: From Without and Within*. Translated by John Barrett. (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), xvii.

[13] Ibid, 180. Translated by John Barrett.

the theme of Shôhaku and his paintings.[14] In 1997, Hosoe Eikô (細江英公, b. 1933) photographed Ohno in the midst of one such performance (Figure 281). A mounted reproduction of Shôhaku's "Shide" was propped against the back of the stage, and upon this was superimposed a slide of Lu Dongbin perched upon his dragon, as seen in the painter's "Immortals" folding screens. As he dances across the stage, Ohno interacts with these life-size characters as if he were Hanshan or another immortal.

Another artwork indicating the dancer's obsession with Shôhaku is a textual sketch that Ohno produced in preparation for his 1998 performance of "The Ways of Heaven and Earth" at the Setagaya Public Theater (Figure 282). According to the sketch, the performance is divided into three acts, each interpreting a particular painting by Shôhaku: "Ogress under a Willow Tree" (Figure 283), "Lions at the Stone Bridge of Mount Tendai" (Figure 284), and "Hanshan and Shide" (Figures 285-286). Surprisingly, Ohno's notes on the final act include quotes from Tsuji's *Kisô no keifu*: he describes the portraits of Hanshan and Shide as being "painted in a style that is like dipping a handful of straw in ink and stirring it around on the painting's surface" and comments how the images "make the muscles in a viewer's back go cold."[15] Ohno's reliance upon Tsuji's text might lead one to assume that, like the author, he maintains a behavioral view of eccentricity. The unconventional view of beauty that pervades not only the dancer's

[14] These dances include "Kazuo Ohno: Dance with Shôhaku" ("Ohno Kazuo: Shôhaku to mau" 「大野一雄：蕭白と舞う」), performed in April 1998 at the Chiba City Museum Hall, and "The Ways of Heaven and Earth" ("Tendô chidô" 「天道地道」), which he first performed in 1995. Ibid, 175, 322.

[15] Tsuji, *Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi.* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1970), 93-4. Tsuji himself has acknowledged that Ohno was inspired by his writings. See Tsuji, "*Kisô no keifu* o kumu monotachi," 46.

writings but the genre of *ankoku butoh* in general, however, strongly evoke Ryûsei's ideas about *hikinbi*:

> *Obviously, as performers age, the uglier they become, outwardly, at any rate. Yet the onset of old age shouldn't blind us to another, truly invaluable, form of beauty in their withering away.... Decrepitude offers the public a fleeting glimpse of another form of beauty, a beauty that a young performer could never render incarnate.*[16]

Furthermore, although *ankoku butoh* wholeheartedly embraces the inevitability of death, the value of heterodoxy, irrationality, and social reclusion that Ohno expresses in his writings is intimately related to the theological interpretation of eccentricity presented in this thesis:

> *Dance is like a domain where madness reigns. After our forced severance from the womb, a part of us longs to regain that long lost freedom. Increasingly, though, we find ourselves facing a dilemma. Blindly following the dictates of reason, we sooner or later end up as prisoners of our own selfishness. We're surrounded everywhere by like-minded sorts. Yet, you standing over there, or you here stretched prostrate out on the floor, you're awakening memories of that "madness" we experienced in the womb. You're manifesting the freedom that each and every one of us so longs to regain. By rendering such "madness" visible, you might help that part of us fettered by reason.*[17]

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[16] Ohno Kazuo and Ohno Yoshito, 93-94.
[17] Ibid, 269.

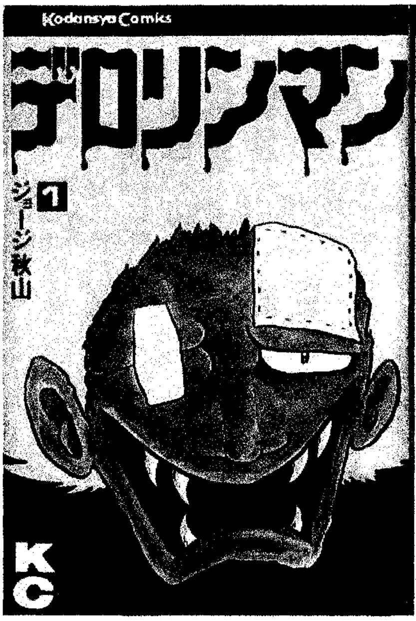

Figure 269. George Akiyama, *Derorin-man*, vol. 1, detail: front cover; Tokyo: Kôdansha Comics, 1976.

Figure 270. George Akiyama, *Derorin-man*, vol. 2, detail: front cover; Tokyo: Kôdansha Comics, 1976.

Figure 271. Nara Yoshitomo, "Nice to See You Again," 1996, acrylic on canvas, 180.0 x 150.0 cm, collection of the artist.

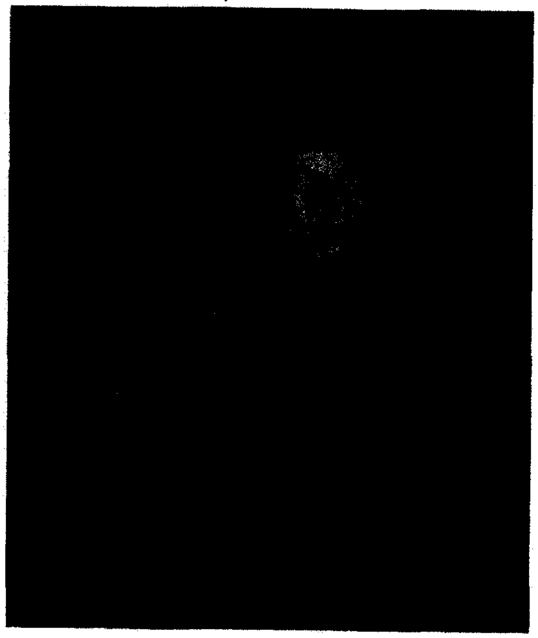

Figure 272. Kishida Ryûsei, "A Little Girl (Standing Reiko)," April 15, 1923, oil on canvas, 53.2 x 45.5 cm, Kamakura Museum of Modern Art.

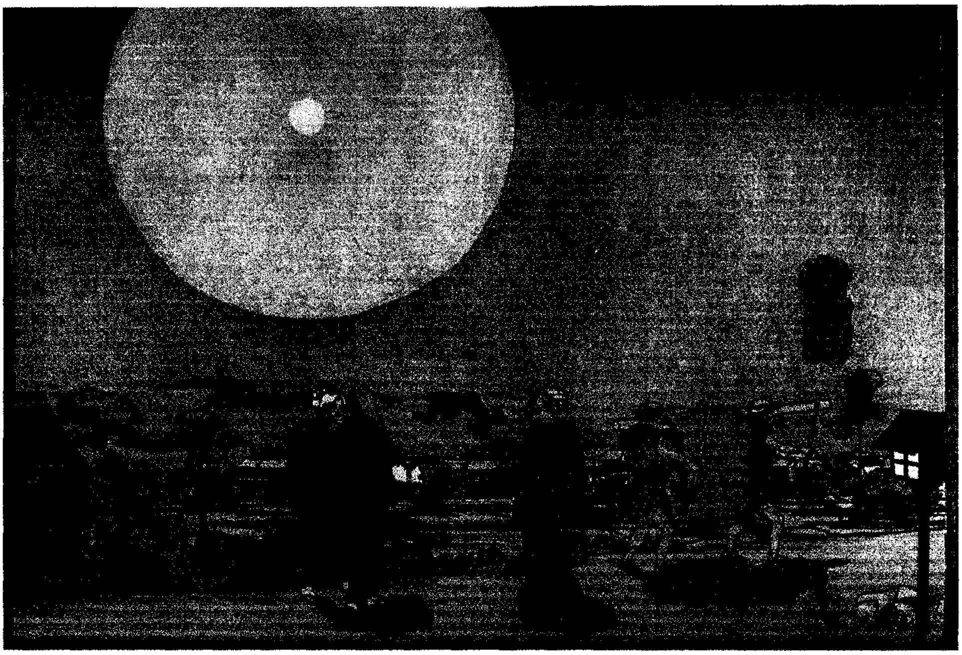

Figure 273. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, "Famous Sites in the Eastern Capital: Shin-Yoshiwara," 19th century, ink and color on paper, woodblock print, ôban (37.8 x 25.8 cm), Ôta Memorial Museum of Art, Tokyo.

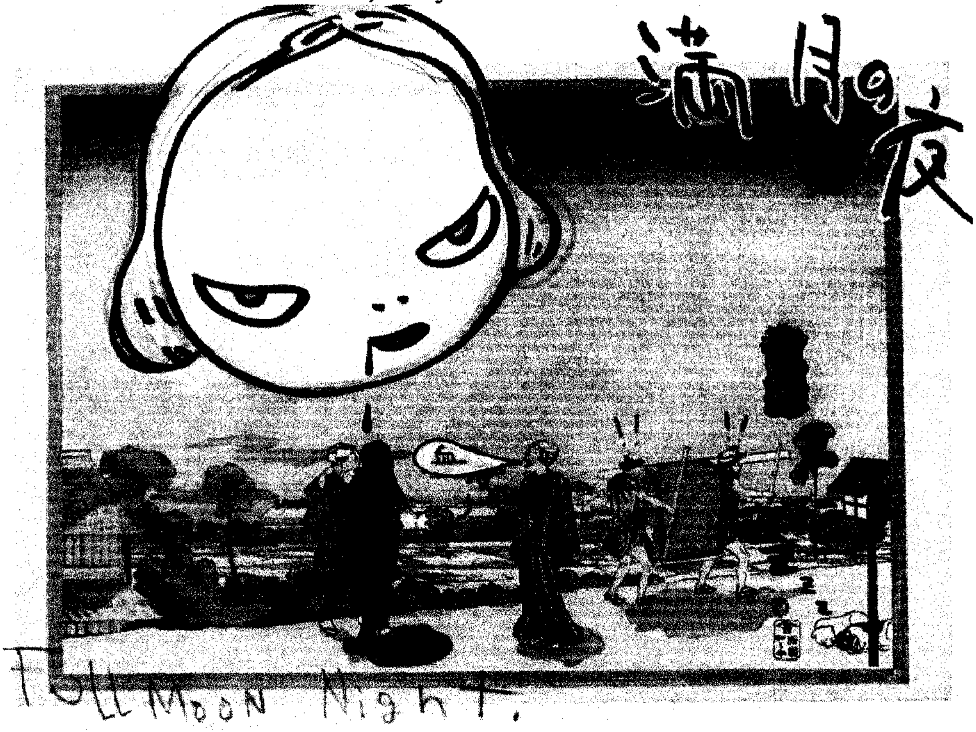

Figure 274. Nara Yoshitomo, "Full Moon Night," 1999, ink and color on paper, size unknown, private collection.

Figure 275. Murakami Takashi, "Doves and Hawks," detail; 1999, computer graphics, size variable, private collection.

Figure 276. Kanô Sansetsu, "Pheasant in a Plum Tree," early 17th century; ink, color and gold on paper; set of sliding doors; Tenkyûin temple, Kyoto.

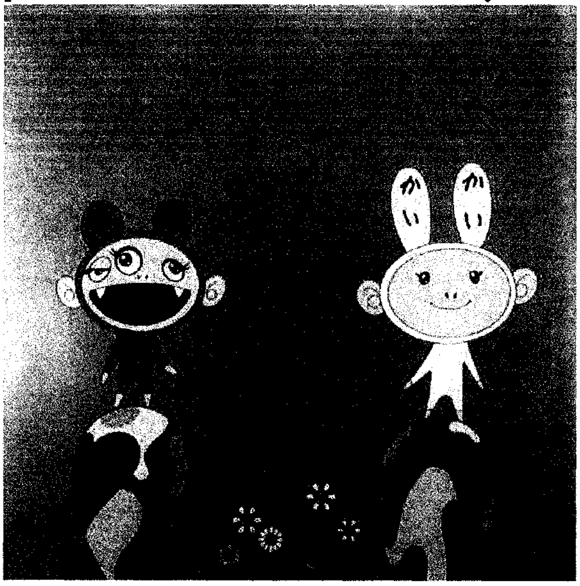

Figure 277. Murakami Takashi, "Red Rope," 2001, acrylic on canvas, 120.0 x 120.0 cm, private collection.

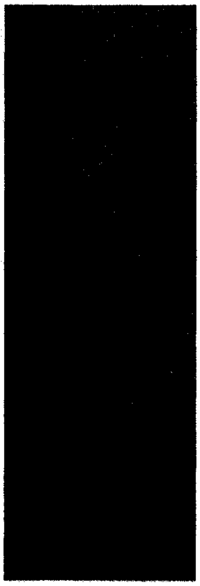

Figure 278. Yan Hui (attr.), "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Shide; 14th c., color on silk, 127.6 x 41.8 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

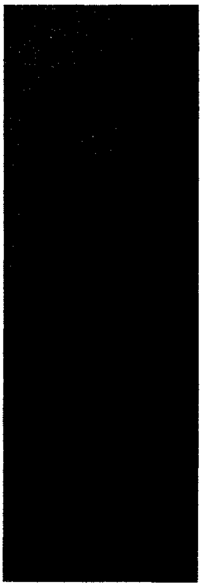

Figure 279. Yan Hui (attr.), "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Hanshan; 14th c., color on silk, 127.6 x 41.8 cm. Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 280. Peter Stockhaus, "Kazuo Ohno: I Dance into the Light," 2004, film still.

Figure 281. Hosoe Eikô, "Kazuo Ohno Breathing in the Spirit of Soga Shôhaku," detail, 1997, photograph.

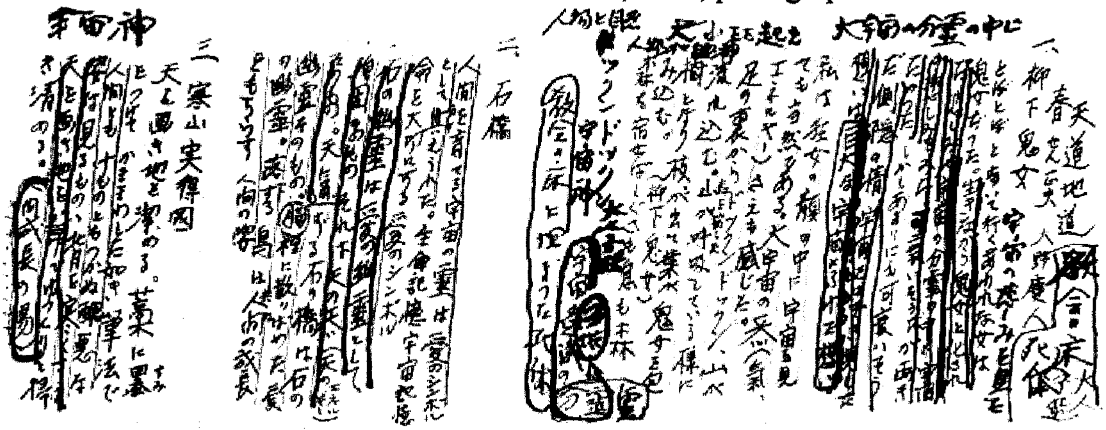

Figure 282. Ohno Kazuo, "Way of Heaven, Way of Earth," 1998, ink on paper, 25.7 x 72.0 cm, private collection.

Figure 283. Soga Shôhaku, "Ogress under Willow Tree," detail: ogress; ca. 1759, ink and light color on paper, 2-fold screen, 154.0 x 152.6 cm, Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music University Art Museum.

Figure 284. Soga Shôhaku, "Lions at the Stone Bridge of Mount Tendai," 1779, ink on silk, hanging scroll, 113.9 x 50.8 cm, Burke Collection.

Figure 285. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Hanshan; 1763-64, ink on paper, 197.0 x 115.0 cm, Kôshôji Temple/Tokyo National Museum.

Figure 286. Soga Shôhaku, "Hanshan and Shide," detail: Shide; 1763-64, ink on paper, 197.0 x 115.0 cm, Kôshôji Temple/Tokyo National Museum.

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Appendix A:
Translation of
The Lineage of Eccentricity: From Matabei to Kuniyoshi
(*Kisô no keifu: Matabei – Kuniyoshi*)

By Tsuji Nobuo 辻惟雄

Published by Bijutsu shuppansha 美術出版社
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Chapter One

The Grief-Filled World & the Floating World: Iwasa Matabei

*When telling stories to each other in the evening in front of Lord Tadamasa, one person said, "Today I met a strange man on Ôhashi bridge who was wearing red, shrunken long underwear (*momohiki*)." The lord said, "That must have been Ukiyo Matabei. I presume that Matabei has come to our province." And just as his lord had guessed, it was Matabei.*

From *Night Tales of Old Man Etsu*
(*Etsuô Yawa* 『越翁夜話』)

It is ordinarily said that handscrolls died out in the Muromachi era. This means that handscrolls since the beginning of the modern era were no longer significant and degenerated into formal, cold objects.

However, I don't think that this is necessarily true. It's not very well known, but I know of the existence of a unique set of extremely colorful handscrolls produced in the first half of the seventeenth century, during the period spanning from the Genna era (1615-1624) through the Kan'ei era (1624-1644). If one were to critique them according to the aesthetic sense associated with the graceful, classical handscrolls of the Heian and Kamakura eras, these works would seem truly vulgar, assertive, repulsive and disgusting – nothing more than objects for sale. But if we were to appreciate them with an eye fully accustomed to the expressionism of contemporary art, they are truly fascinating objects. Let me finish my preface here and move on to introducing the artwork.

The Itami Museum of Art has in its collection "Tokiwa in the Mountains" (*Yamanaka Tokiwa* 「山中常盤」), a set of twelve brightly colored handscrolls. Each volume is approximately 12.5 meters in length, and together they add up to an enormous total of 150 meters. It takes about half a day just to look at the entirety of the handscroll set. However, if a person was blessed enough to have an opportunity to see the entirety,

he would certainly be fascinated by the peculiar personality of that long scroll (Plates 3-5).

"Tokiwa in the Mountains" focuses upon the legend of Ushiwaka 牛若, a kind of *otogi-zôshi* お伽草子 ("companion book," late medieval prose narrative) made in the Muromachi era.

Worrying about the journey of Wakaushi who, aiming for the capture of the Heike, quietly went down to Ôshû province, his mother, Tokiwa Gozen 常盤御前, sets out on a journey along with a lady chamberlain, but she fell sick at a lodging in the mountains of Mino province. Six thieves at the lodge noticed Tokiwa's possessions and break into her room at midnight, strip their clothes off, and stab them to death. The next day, Ushiwaka, worrying about his mother's health, returns to the capital by himself, lodges in the mountains along the way, and strangely decides to stay at the lodge where Tokiwa was murdered. At this point, Tokiwa appears to Ushiwaka in a dream and makes a request of him. Startled awake, he hears the whole story from the master of the lodge and vows to avenge her death. Then, pretending that a number of famous people are lodging at the inn, he lures the group of thieves back, and displaying superhuman strength, he slays them all, carries their bodies to a pond and throws them in. Again, Ushiwaka returns to the east (Ôshû), takes command of a large army, and on the way back to the capitol, holds a polite memorial service at her grave…

That's the outline of the story.

In the folding screen "Scenes in and around the Capital" (*Rakuchû rakugai zu* 洛中洛外図屏風) (Collection of the Tokyo National Museum), which depicts the appearance of Kyoto around the end of the Keichô era (1614-15), a viewer can see "Tokiwa in the Mountains" being performed as a marionette (*jôruri* 浄瑠璃) show at a small store along the Shijô river, and in this multi-volume work, the actual *jôruri* text from that time is used. In other words, the artist made the marionette puppet show into a scroll.

The personality of the scripts for not only "Tokiwa in the Mountains" but all the "old *jôruri* plays" in general (that being the generic name of marionette puppet plays from the Keichô era [1596-1615] through around the Genna [1615-1624] or Kan'ei [1624-1644] era) have fantastic color and a strong epic feel inherited from the personality of Muromachi-era *otogi-zôshi*, and when watching them, one can't really feel a sense of reality. The script of "Tokiwa in the Mountains" is the same. However, the twelve brightly colored volumes that borrow from this text, totally unlike the *otogi-zôshi*, are overflowing with garish, vivid imagery.

The particular quality of these handscrolls is, first of all, in their color. Detailed patterns in gold and silver paint are added to gaudy color schemes of primary colors such as blue-violet, blue-green, red-violet, red, and ochre found in the figures and architecture, and a florid, decorative effect is emphasized. That decoration to the point of excess is tied to a particular expressionistic character. Figures, buildings and trees are painted large and boldly; the artist's habit of expressing the forms in the figures' faces, hands and legs in particular is impressive. A kind of impudent laziness and a vulgarity running through genre paintings from the same era is found throughout the entire scroll.

What is shocking even in this context is the scene of Tokiwa's murder in the fourth volume (Plate 3).

The six thieves, with their ugly, unusual and villainous expressions exaggerated in a manner rather similar to comic books, burst into Tokiwa's room, planning to strip the lady and servant of their clothes and then to run away, but seeing the two naked women crying, "Give us our clothes back!" they return, murder Tokiwa and then stab her servant to death. The artist uses seven images to describe the course of events in this single scene. By means of obstinately repetitious depiction, he is able to paint the scene with vivid details, such as the way in which the color of Tokiwa's flesh changes over time. Even though the narration in this section simply describes the action with a sense of detachment, by comparison, the viewer can sense in the painter's tone an unnatural, passionate interest in atrocity. Another interest he displays is for the expression of trees. In the scene where Tokiwa is stabbed, the trunk of the pine tree in the garden twists

violently as if writhing in pain, and all the needles tense up and face in the same direction. In the next scene, the trunk and needles of the same pine tree droop limply, further indicating the way in which Tokiwa's life is fading from her. This kind of anthropomorphism of objects can also be seen in the landscapes and bird-and-flower paintings of Hokusai, and I am interested in the way that, in either case, the artist's style is connected to his eccentric passion.

The revenge scene that appears from the eighth volume onward is no less awesome. While the thieves break into his room, Ushiwaka pretends to sleep, and after they pass by him, he suddenly attacks and slashes them up. He then frankly disposes of them by decapitating them, cutting their chests open, and cutting their bodies up lengthwise. One may say that it's absurd, but the bizarre images of the bodies that have been *filleted* lengthwise show a chilling sense of humor. In the following scene, he carries the corpses, wrapped up in a mat, to a whirlpool late at night and throws them in. The reason why the artist's depiction of this scene, which ought to be described as truly humorous vulgarity, has a strange sense of realism might be because in the Genna era, during which this handscroll is presumed to have been made, the memories of bloody war were still fresh in people's minds.

Perhaps I have focused too much attention upon the aberrant aspects of "Tokiwa in the Mountains." The scene in this handscroll in which Tokiwa inquires about Ushiwaka and journeys down the Tôkaidô road also includes quietly lyrical descriptions. However, if one were to ask which of these two aspects best represents the essence of this handscroll, the answer is obvious. Truly, "Tokiwa in the Mountains" is a work of art that's like a little demon that suddenly comes flying up from out of the art historical tomb of handscrolls.

The artist's name, however, is not written anywhere on this unique, monumental handscroll. Simply, it is attributed to the artist Iwasa Matabei, and some readers of advanced age may remember that, at the beginning of the Shôwa era (1926-89), when this scroll was "discovered" by Hasegawa Minokichi (1893-1973), an energetic debate erupted about the accuracy of this attribution. The discovery of "Tokiwa in the

Mountains" and the course of the debate that accompanied it was surprisingly dramatic, a mood quite fitting to the character of handscrolls.

At the end of the 3rd year of Shôwa (1928), the owner of Isseido bookstore in Tokyo's Kanda district casually showed ten photographs of the work "Tokiwa in the Mountains" to Hasegawa Minokichi, a representative of the biggest bookshop at that time, and told him that a German planned to buy the handscroll for $25,000. The handscroll enchanted Hasegawa. Courageously deciding that he must protect it at all costs from being taken to a foreign country, Hasegawa mortgaged his home and sold everything, including his telephone and his ukiyo-e collection, and clutching the money he received from these sales, set out for Kyoto, bought the original artwork, and returned home holding it aloft in triumph. To the extent that I have researched the matter, the scroll had been owned by the Matsudaira family, the former lords of the Tsuyama Clan, and in Taishô 14 (1925), it was sold by an art club, but at that time it received no particular attention and was bought up by someone or another. On the verge of it being passed over to Germany, the transaction was stopped by Mr. Hasegawa.

The year after the "discovery" of this monumental work, in October of Shôwa 4 (1929), the scroll in its entirety was displayed at the Kyoto National Museum. Later, in February of Shôwa 5 (1930), it was again displayed at the Tokyo branch of Mitsukoshi department store, and the exhibition was a great success with swarms of visitors lined up to see the artwork. When it was exhibited at the Kyoto National Museum, "The Tale of Horie" (*Horie Monogatari* 「堀江物語」), a work attributed to Matabei in the collection of the elderly Murayama Ryôhei (村山龍平翁, 1850-1933), was exhibited as a supplementary "sister piece" of "Tokiwa in the Mountains."

The work "The Tale of Horie" in the collection of Mr. Murayama is a fragment of a handscroll and is composed of three volumes. Combined with the single fragment owned by Mr. Furumori 古森 of Ise City, four fragments are extant. As can be seen at a glance, the fragments, with characteristics such as the artist's particular use of color and his individualistic depiction of figures, are a perfect match with "Tokiwa in the

Mountains," and even after comparing small details, it seems that the two works were painted by the same artist (Plate 1).

It is believed that the story upon which this handscroll is based was, like the story of "Tokiwa in the Mountains," is a revenge story from an *Otogi-zôshi* novel written in the Muromachi era. From the writing style of the text at the beginning of the scroll, it seems that this artwork is also an illustration of an "old *jôruri*" script. The following is the outline of the story:

Horie Saemon Yorikata 堀江左衛門頼方, leader of a powerful clan in the province of Shimotsuke, welcomes the daughter of lord Hara no Saemon 原の左衛門 from Ueno province as the wife of his son Saburô Yorizumi 三郎頼純. Saburô's wife produces one child, and the family lives in harmony, but due to his father's death by illness, his territory is confiscated and he falls into poverty. Lord Hara no Saemon regrets this, reclaims his daughter, and plans to offer his daughter to a regional official who is infatuated with her. Lord Hara advises Saburô to go to the capital to demand the return of his territory, and on his way to the capital, he ambushes and attacks Saburô on Mount Ueda 上田. Saburô and his retainers fight desperately, and in the end, they commit suicide. Meanwhile, Saburô's wife, the princess, is beckoned to the absent lord Hara's residence, but Saburô appears to her in a dream and asks her to pray for his salvation. She thinks that this is a bad omen, and when she considers returning to the Horie estate, she is abducted to the estate of the regional officer. Upon seeing the head of her husband that has been brought there, she commits suicide. The princess' mother follows her to the grave as well. The regional officer intends to kill the orphaned child Tsukiwaka 月若, but the boy is miraculously saved. He grows up and assumes the name of Tarô 太郎. One day, Tarô hears the entire tale from a strange person. He raises an army and attacks the regional officer's estate. He well avenges his parents, and just as one might expect, he reclaims the territory…

Illustration 1. The deserted house. From "The Tale of Horie," intermediate volume (Number Unknown). Collection of Mr. Murayama.

In the four fragments passed on to Mr. Murayama and Mr. Furumori, the revenge section, corresponding to the latter half of this story, is painted. I have already mentioned that the characteristics of the painting style closely resemble those of "Tokiwa in the Mountains," but compared to "Tokiwa in the Mountains," there is not as much unrestrained, extremely malevolent behavior; rather, it differs in its nuance, and throughout it one can see elegant expressions that bring to mind classical handscrolls. For example, Tarô, on his way to seek revenge, looks upon the desolate remains of the Horie estate. The scene (from among the Murayama fragments) is impressively filled with deep emotion. The image of silver moonlight pouring down upon the roof and pillars, which are buried in the grass and rotting away, is painted in a way filled with emotion (Illustration 1). As seen here, the depth of classical knowledge possessed by this painter cannot be simply described as vulgar roughness.

The scene of Tarô's fight, which fills the entire section owned by Mr. Furumori, is perhaps the climax of this handscroll. A particularly wonderful part is Tarô's sudden attack. The depiction of the interior of the regional officer's residence, where people are screaming and running in a panic, people are disarming one another, and women are sobbing loudly, is the epitome of disarray. By means of his skillful composition, mixed with a sense of humor, the artist sufficiently enlivens the elongated space. The lively expression is not unprecedented in classical handscrolls. However, if a viewer continues on to the battle scene, there is what seems to be the origin of the artist's infamous "body

slice" images, and as we might have expected, it is a bloody depiction (Plate 1). In addition, at the end of this fragment, there is a cruel scene in which Tarô ties up the wife of the regional officer and, after stabbing to death her two children as she watches, he cuts off her head.

The particular characteristics of this handscroll, similar to those of "Tokiwa in the Mountains," become apparent in this section.

Incidentally, directly after the end of the Pacific War, the formerly powerful families were forced to sell the twelve volumes of "The Tale of Horie," most of the images and text of which seem to have been copied directly as sketches at a time when these four handscroll fragments were all complete. Currently, they are in the collection of Atami Museum of Art (From here onwards, I will refer to these as "the 12-volumes"). These themselves are pieces of fabulous workmanship, and perhaps it is an artwork produced by the same genealogy of artists in a time period soon after the four fragments. I have seen it, but as a critic, it is difficult to guess first of all whether this is the original appearance of the four fragments. If you compare the same scene from both works, you realize that, although the 12-volumes are obviously sketches based upon the four fragments, they are economized works, in which the artist changed the shape of illustrations in places, skipped a few, and decreased the total number of volumes by about six. In other words, "The Tale of Horie," of which only the four fragments currently owned by Mr. Murayama and Mr. Furumori are left, was originally an enormous work comprised of eighteen volumes from beginning to end. Furthermore, in addition to the enormity of this handscroll, another startling aspect about it is its content, which is overflowing with the artist's interest in bloody atrocity.

The fifth of the 12-volumes, containing scenes from the battle on Mount Ueda to Saburô's *seppuku*, is entirely filled with depictions dripping with blood. In the sixth volume, one finds scenes such as the one in which the bodies of the enemy soldiers are carried to Hara's residence, turning the interior of the hall into a pandemonium of amazement and grief. Another similar image shows a procession marching towards the residence of the regional officer. The soldiers towards the rear carry a collection of

severed heads, while the soldiers in front bear the severed head of Horie. These scenes are a bit too garish to look at directly (Illustration 2). Furthermore, the following scene, in which Hara's daughter, the princess, commits suicide along with her mother, is reminiscent of the "murder of Tokiwa" described earlier: the events are insistently and elaborately described by means of persistent, repetitious forms. In the eighteen volumes based upon those fragments owned by Mr. Murayama and Mr. Furumori, these kinds of peculiar scenes are probably depicted with even more minute detail.

Illustration 2. Line of soldiers carrying the heads of the enemy. From "the Tale of Horie," Volume 7. Collection of Atami Museum of Art.

As another "sister work" of "Tokiwa in the Mountains," I need to now introduce the twelve-volume work "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" (上瑠璃), also a handscroll currently in the collection of Itami Art Museum. Along with "Tokiwa in the Mountains," this was passed down from the Matsudaira family, the former leaders of the Tsuyama Clan. In Taishô 10 (1921), they were forced to sell it together with "Tokiwa in the Mountains." It entered the collection of Ôhashi Shintarô 大橋新太郎, but according to Mr. Hasegawa, the discovery of "Tokiwa in the Mountains" became an opportunity for this work to receive similar attention from the world.

The twelve volumes of "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" is a handscroll the text of which is taken from the script of a famous, twelve-part *jôruri* puppet play that deals with the romance between Ushiwaka and Princess Jôruri (浄瑠璃). (At the time that it was written, the character *jô* [上] was used instead of the character *jô* [浄].)

Ushiwaka, along with Kaneuri Kichiji 金売吉次 and others, heads east from the capitol, and along the way, at a lodge in Yahagi 矢矧 town in the province of Mikawa, is charmed by the sound of an orchestra in which the daughter of the head of the lodge is playing. He himself pulls out a flute and begins to play, at which point the daughter is likewise charmed. Knowing that he is the child of a member of the Genji Clan, she secretly brings Ushiwaka into her residence. The princess ultimately assents to his amorous and beautiful propositions, which are filled with waka poetry, and they ultimately make love. The following morning, they part company, and Ushiwaka, again goes on the road, but at a lodge in Kanbara, he thinks about Jôruri so much that he falls sick and is left behind by his fellow travelers. The female innkeeper propositions Ushiwaka, but is refused and gets angry, so Ushiwaka is thrown out by the seaside, where he dies. At this point, the family treasure that he had been carrying transform into a large serpent, a child, a white pigeon, and a chicken that vow to watch over Ushiwaka. Meanwhile, after being informed by the deity of the Genji Clan, Shôhachiman 正八幡, Jôruri heads towards Kanbara, and after enduring a thunderstorm, finds Ushiwaka's grave and digs his corpse out of the sand. By means of the great god Amaterasu 天照 and the miracles of Hakone Shrine, Ushiwaka comes back to life. Ushiwaka follows through with Jôruri's request and orders a *tengu* (goblin) to send her back to Yahagi, and again he heads back down the road towards Ôshû. In Ôshû, he gathers a large army, and on the way back towards the capitol, he drops by the lodge in Yahagi, but it is after the princess has aroused her mother's anger, has been thrown out of the lodge, and has died of illness. Ushiwaka goes to Jôruri's grave, and he presents a song about cosmic merit to her. At this point, he can hear a response song coming from the grave, the tomb shakes, and the five rings crumble into three. Ushiwaka builds a temple on top of her grave and calls it Reisenji 冷泉寺. He then takes her mother, wraps her up in a reed mat and throws her into the Yahagi river. Thereupon, he again heads out to subdue the Heike…

This is the plot of "The Tale of Princess Jôruri." As the name "The 12 Stages of Jôruri" (*Jôruri ni jû dan* 浄瑠璃二十段) implies, since it is connected with these popular

events, a few different versions of the script are known, but according to the comparative studies of them by Mr. Wakatsuki Hôji and Mr. Watsuji Tetsurô, the period in which the words of "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" were written was from the Genna era to the middle of the Kan'ei era (ca. 1615-40).

The personality of both the first half and the latter half of the story changes in "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" handscroll. The first half, from the developments from the beginnings of their love affair at the Yahagi inn until they exchange promises, doesn't have the kind of movement typical of a handscroll. It is thought that the majority of the content in the text (such as the enumeration of wakas) and detailed descriptions (such as the embroidery of their costumes) were extremely difficult to translate into the animated forms of a handscroll. In the second half of the scroll, which reverses this trend, the plot of the story begins to progress at an extremely fast pace and becomes much more suitable to the format of a handscroll. However, the important part is the first half. According to Mr. Watsuji's explanation, what made this story particularly popular as the script of a marionette *jôruri* performance is the mosaic of beautiful words that describe the plot twists that occur at the Yahagi inn and the bewitching way in which the puppets sway. These factors have an alluring, intoxicating effect upon the viewers, and the recreation of that effect in a handscroll is the challenge passed on to the painter. The painter of "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" seems to have solved the problem by means of startlingly minute decorative effect and the thorough repetition of imagery.

Each scene of Princess Jôruri inside her residence, the sliding doors, folding screens, each piece of furniture, and the figures' costumes display such heavily applied primary colors as gold, silver, green-blue, blue-violet, ochre, red, rouge, and orange and are densely decorated with over ten different kinds of patterns. The details in the patterning within the costumes is alarming. For example, all the words from the script of "the Curiosity Stage" are written, and the material of Ushiwaka's costume is embroidered with extreme details – the battle of Genpei, Chinese and Japanese monkeys, a mandarin duck, and a peacock are reproduced with microscopic precision. The detailed and complicated style of decoration, in which gold, silver, and expensive pigments are used in

such large quantity that one cannot even see the paper is not limited to this scene; it is a characteristic common to the entirety of the 12 volumes.

By means of this kind of careful, miniature work, the scene of Princess Jôruri's residence is like the one-cell-at-a-time method of production for an animated film, continuing from volume one to volume six while moving the characters just a bit from frame to frame. Truly, a person who sees an image repeated twenty-five times will certainly just fall into a stupor due to that frighteningly repetitive decorative spirit (Plate 2). Mr. Hiromatsu Mamoru's description of this handscroll as "vulgarly gorgeous" (as quoted in the art anthology *Mô Hitotsu no Nihon Bi [Another Japanese Aesthetic]*) was quite fitting.

In the second half of the handscroll, the artist alters the mood, and we begin to see more active change occurring. Particularly in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh volumes, this kind of intention obviously creates a curious effect. In the ninth volume, in the scene where Ushiwaka's family treasure transforms into a large serpent, a child and a chicken, firstly, a fisherman and his family, a tree twisted in the strong wind, and a net that curls into an "S" shape, enter the scene in chaotic ways, and the appearance of formidable events are foreshadowed. Two spectral dragons suddenly appear. One has a black trunk, and the other has a white trunk, and both have red bellies and are full of reptilian gaudiness. In the scene from the tenth volume in which Princess Jôruri worries about the lightning, within a device on the same stage, appears Raijin 雷神, the Thunder God, who has grown golden bristles on his body and reminds viewers of an arthropod (like a centipede) (Illustration 3). In the eleventh volume, the enormous chicken *tengu* (goblin) who sends Jôruri back home is also depicted in a strange way.

Illustration 3. Appearance of the Thunder God. From "The Tale of Princess Jôruri," Volume 10. Collection of Atami Museum of Art.

Also in the final "Stage of the Crumbling Five Rings," a shocking scene suddenly appears. It is the one in which Ushiwaka gets revenge on Jôruri's mother, who tortures her and allows her to die, by wrapping the mother in a mat and cruelly drowning her. The scene is not in other versions of the story, and it may have been added only to this handscroll.

If we look at the particular contents of this "Tale of Princess Jôruri, " we can probably be satisfied with the reasoning behind why this handscroll is considered the sister artwork of "Tokiwa in the Mountains" and the "The Tale of Horie" fragments owned by Mr. Murayama and Mr. Furumori. This relationship can be verified by the particular way in which the characters are depicted. The consistent, visible, assertive shapes in the appearance of their facial expressions, hands and feet, and bodies are common throughout the artist's oeuvre.

Be that as it may, "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" handscroll, in its thoroughly decorative sense, surpasses *Yamanaka* and *Horie*. That fierce devotion to such a decorative sense, in a way, feels like something that leads back even to the *Heike Nokyô* handscroll. It is undeniable that, essentially, the production style develops similarities to

handicrafts, and the style of expression becomes "gentrified," and elements reminiscent of collaborative workshop production increase.

At this time, I will touch upon one more work, the handscroll *Oguri* in the collection of the Imperial Household. It is composed of a total of 15 volumes The length of each volume from the first through the fourth is roughly the same as I have previously mentioned, but from the fifth onwards, the length of each volume doubles in length, and the total length reaches an extraordinary amount of 325 meters. As opposed to each of the handscrolls introduced thus far, which have used the scripts of "old *jôruri*" plays as their text, Oguri uses the lecture "Oguri Hankan" (the semiofficial Oguri) as the text, and as a result, the flavor of the work is more or less different, but the painting style itself is obviously that of the same artist. Nevertheless, in comparison to all the works discussed up until now, the painting technique is inferior, and the enormous amount of space of the combined volumes seems to be too much to deal with. It seems like the work of an artist who is at least one generation behind his time. Yet, close up depictions such as the scene in which the Dragon King appears at Lake Mizoroga, and the scene in which Oguri Hankan rides and manages to control the demonic steed, and the scene of the court of Emma (Buddhist hell) have a shocking effect that harkens back to the second half of "The Tale of Princess Jôruri."

The discovery of "Tokiwa in the Mountains" by Mr. Hasegawa had immeasurable benefits, leading to the revelation of the existence of a unique group of enormous "sister" handscrolls, one after another. Since, with the exception of "Oguri," all of them use the scripts of "old Jûruri" plays as their texts, I have labeled these handscrolls, including "Tokiwa in the Mountains," as the "Old *Jôruri* Handscroll Set." More than ten years ago, when I was a graduate student, I was blasted by Professor Yamane Arimitsu, and fortunately I was blessed to work for the first time alongside all the esteemed owners of the Itami Museum of Art, where the inspection and photographing of all the volumes in their enormous handscroll set was undertaken. For this reason, so many photographs that

I became sick of them, and as a result of my innumerable comparisons between various works, I produced the following hypothesis.

All of the works associated with the "Old *Jôruri* Handscroll Set" were produced at one workshop – I nicknamed it "The Yamanaka Workshop" - during a time period from the Genna era (1615 – 1624) through the Kan'ei era (1624-1644). This workshop was led by one artist (Artist X) who possessed a unique sense, and within this set of enormous handscrolls, the artist himself painted by hand "Tokiwa in the Mountains" and "The Tale of Horie" (the four fragments in the collection of Mr. Murayama and Mr. Furumori). "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" should be called a particularly painstaking, gorgeous work centered around a professional painter (Artist X^1) who was acquainted with Artist X's style, but the period of production was perhaps slightly later than the former two works. There is a high probability that "The Tale of Horie" (the 12 volumes) was also produced by Artist X^1. Oguri was the work of other artists of slightly inferior skill, and the period of production was also the latest.

As I see it, up until now, there has been no need to change this conclusion. (The only alteration I would make to this hypothesis is that the production period of the four fragments of "The Tale of Horie" was slightly earlier than I originally stated; I have come to think that it is possible to move the date of production to around the end of the Keichô era [1596 – 1615]). Here, I intend to focus upon the existence of the mysterious "Artist X," who should also be called the leader of "The Yamanaka Workshop" and the father of the unconventional "Old *Jôruri* Handscroll Set." Who is he, and as we might expect, could he be the artist traditionally called Iwasa Matabei? Here I have reached the point of introducing to you readers the character Iwasa Matabei, also called "Ukiyo Matabei."

It is well known that the spirit of worldly affirmation prevalent in the beginning of the modern era blew a breath of fresh air into the field of genre painting and produced many famous works of Nikuhitsu Fûzoku-ga (Ukiyo-e Genre Painting). In particular, the period from the Genna era through the Kan'ei era (1615-44) was the period of maturation for early modern genre painting (kinsei shoki fûzoku-ga), and simultaneously this corresponds to a period of new development, in response to an expanded market,

medium- and small-sized folding screens were mass-produced as "ready-mades" – so-called *shikomi-e* ("slide-in pictures"). Also genre paintings of beauties, pictures that show the conditions of prostitutes and brothels, became popular around this time, and we should call these works the direct models for ukiyo-e prints.

Incidentally, most of the genre paintings made in the Genna and Kan'ei eras lacked the artist's seal and signature. Be they works by amateur painters who rebelled against the world of the great family of the Kanô school, or be they works by the professional work of nameless *machi eshi* (town artists), they were all anonymous. However, among them, there are truly many works that are said to be by Iwasa Matabei 岩佐又兵衛 (Matabei 又平). For example, the Hikone Screen, a masterpiece representative of the genre painting of the time, is one such work. On one hand, in the writings of Hanabusa Icchô (1652-1724), an artist of taste from the Genroku era, the following passage can be found: "Nowadays, Iwasa what's-his-name, born in Echizen district, is able to paint 'dancing girls' in contemporary, fashionable attire from him imagination. People in the world nicknamed him 'Ukiyo Matabei'…" Later, the book *Ukiyo-e Ruikô* (*Various Thoughts on Ukiyo-e*) (written by Ota Nanpo and Shuku Sanjin, ca. 1790) reasoned that Matabei is the one who founded the genre of Ukiyo-e. However, among historians who specialize in the end of the Edo period and the beginning of the Meiji period, it seems like, in actuality, they didn't have the slightest idea about whether this traditional figure really existed or not. There were no objects that he was known to have once possessed, and his biography was known to only a fragmentary extent. In addition, "Stammering Matabei," created through imaginative embellishment of the contemporary legend of Iwasa Matabei by Chikamatsu Monzaemon in his play *Keisei Hangonkô* (1708), inevitably merged with the image of the actual Matabei. The historical Matabei became a mystery of the distant past, and it seems there were people who doubted the veracity of his legend.

Nevertheless, in the 19th year of Meiji (1886), Kawashiro Tôshô, the chief priest of a Shinto shrine discovered the painting *Portraits of the 36 Waka Poets*, on the back of which was written, "Completed on June 7, Kan'ei 17 (1640) by artist Tosa Mitsunobu

Matsuryû Iwasa Matabei Katsumochi." Since Matabei's standard work[1] had been found, this became an opportunity, and after this, works with the seal of Katsumochi were identified one after another, and from the family identified as Matabei's descendants, biographical materials and writings by the artist were discovered. At this point, one aspect of the identity of the artist Matabei became clear: the outline of his varied life, though vague, rose to the surface.

Iwasa Matabei was born in the sixth year of the Taisei era (1578) as the son of the mistress of Araki Murashige, the confident retainer of Lord Ota Nobunaga in Itami City, Settsu Province. However, in October of that year, his father Murashige plotted a revolt against his lord Nobunaga. The following year, after a hard battle, Nobunaga reclaimed Itami Castle, but before that, Murashige had fled. The angered Nobunaga ordered the execution of everyone who remained in the castle, and he brought Murashige's wife and their more than thirty children out to the riverside along sixth avenue in the capitol and beheaded all of them, even the infants. The atrocious scene at this time is written in detail in *Nobunaga Kôki* (*Public Accounts of Nobunaga*). It is believed that Matabei's mother also died this violent death, but Matabei was rescued by his nursemaid and grew up amidst the religious community of Honganji temple in Kyoto. After becoming an adult, it is said that he served under Nobunaga's son Nobuo, not as a soldier, but as something like a personal assistant (*otogishû*) or secretary (*sekihitsu*). He discarded the family name of Araki and took up his mother's maiden name of Iwasa, and he took the personal name of Katsumochi. He resigned himself to the samurai lifestyle. He attended poetry and music gatherings held at the residence of Nijô Akizane (1556-1619), a *kanpaku* (chief advisor to the emperor). With his blessed artistic talent, he was able to save himself throughout the twists and turns in his life as the surviving child of Murashige.

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[1] An artwork that could function as a criterion for determining the authenticity of other works attributed to the same artist.

In the summer of Keichô 20 (1615), by means of a camp in Osaka, the luck of Toyotomi's forces ran out, and a new era – the Genna era – was ushered in. That year, Matabei was 38 years old. Perhaps it was because he was too well known where he lived, but before long, he left the capital and proceeded to Kitanoshô in Echizen district. At that time, the lord of Kitanoshô castle was Matsudaira Tadanao (1595-1650), known from the book *Tadanao Kyôgyô Jôki* written by Kiku Chikan (1888-1948). Matsudaira was the grandchild of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and because of his violent misconduct, in the ninth year of the Genna era, by order of the military government, he was exiled to Bungo province. Later, I would like to discuss the deeply interesting meeting between Matabei and this truly exceptional "big name of Kabuki." After the banishment of Tadanao, rule of the Kitanoshô area was continued by his nephew Tadamasa, who changed the name of the town to Fukui. Matabei stayed in this area for a long time, and ultimately, for twenty years, until the 13th year of the Kan'ei era (1636), he lived in the Echizen area.

There seems to be almost no records regarding Matabei's Fukui period, except for an unusual document. A letter written by Matabei – a petition that had been retained has recently been found at Hô'unji temple, located on the western side of Fukui city in a fishing village facing the Sea of Japan. An appeal was sent to Senshûji temple in Isshinden, Ise Province, complaining that it was unjust that Hatanaka Senshûji, the temple that previously stood on the grounds of Hô'unji temple, was being called the headquarters of the Takeda denomination of Buddhism, and this document, as a reply to that appeal, was submitted to Lord Matsudaira Tadamasa in the tenth year of the Kan'ei era (1633). It is believed that this was the product of Matabei's experience as Nobuo's secretary and a taste of his life experiences around that time, but it seems that his main business was, as one might expect, painting. He developed his individual, unique painting style in the climate and environment of Fukui, and his fame spread throughout the area. In the fourteenth year of the Kan'ei era (1637), he received an order from the descendants of the shogun, and so leaving his wife and child in Fukui, he departed, heading to Edo by way of Kyoto. A travel log from this journey, signed and written in his own hand, *Kaikokudô no ki* (*Record of a Cross-country Journey*), has been found.

There is nothing particularly unusual about either the style or contents, but it is impossible to overlook the depressed, pessimistic feelings that he had at this time at the age of sixty. For example, upon seeing the roadside attractions such as marionette shows, rare animal exhibits, "strong woman" performances, and kabuki performances along the riverbank of fourth avenue, he writes:

> ***There is nothing so sad as one who earns a few coins through backbreaking labor and crosses the world to experience pleasure. He becomes less and less able to deeply appreciate beauty.***

However, when he reached Edo, he received a great deal of work. In particular, from Kan'ei 15 (1638) through Kan'ei 17 (1640), he was extremely busy with both the production of furniture for the palace of Kawagoe Tôshô for the occasion of the daughter of shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu marrying into the Owari family as well as with the production of the *Portraits of the Waka Poets*. In Edo, where there was a shortage of authentic artists at the time, his skills must have been very highly prized. He remained in Edo, and in the 3rd year of Kei'an (1650), he died in Edo at the age of 73.

One of his letters that is thought to have been sent to an unknown address while he was living in Edo, has been located, and in this, various things are written: he apologizes for bothering his associate, a contact by the name of "Yagoemon," with his financial carelessness; he worries about the "cause" – his ill health; a folding screen that had been ordered earlier was delivered later than promised, and this put him in a terribly bad mood; and next time, he would be sure to deliver his work on time. It seems that his troubles never ended.

A painting that is said to be a self-portrait that Matabei sent from Edo to his wife and child in Fukui prefecture has been passed down (Illustration 4). It is the portrait of a rather undistinguished old man with gray hair, a thin beard, and a head that's shaped like a hammer. Due to the fact that the painting style does not exhibit the qualities of Matabei's style, and to the fact that he is holding rosary beads in his hand, I believe that this is not a self-portrait but a posthumous portrait by an artist who knew him well.

Perhaps the facial expression of this lifeless, somewhat melancholy old man capture to a surprising extent the features of Matabei at the end of his life.

We know of as many as fifteen standard works, including folding screens, hanging scrolls, and albums, that have Matabei's seals, such as "Katsumochi" and "Aotômiyazu." Their themes range from purely Yamato-e style themes like the Waka Poets to purely Chinese images like the Cultivation Picture (*Kôsaku-zu*). As seen in the Kanedani Folding Screen[2] and the Ikeda Folding Screen,[3] his repertoire focused on so-called *wakan koji jinbutsu-zu* (figure paintings of Chinese and Japanese legendary figures). Chinese legendary characters such as Laozi or Ôshôkun as well as the protagonists of Japanese classics such as the Tale of Ise and the Tale of Genji appear side by side in his illustrative folding screens and handscrolls. Also, regarding his style, various elements, including Muromachi ink paintings, Kanô school paintings, works from the Kaihô school, the Hasegawa school, the Unkoku school, and the Tosa school are combined in a way that is more muddled than it is harmonious. This element of crossbreeding so many Chinese and Japanese movements is a dominant characteristic of his work. However, what we cannot overlook here is that in all of these styles is an individual, assertive sense that cannot be categorized. This is a quality that runs deeply through all the works. I'd like to focus upon the three particular elements of his standard works.

The first of these is his eccentric, expressive personality. The tiger in "Tiger Painting" (formerly the Kanedani Folding Screen) he creates some kind of reptilian, eerie atmosphere that sticks to the bamboo

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[2] *Originally paintings on paper mounted on a pair of six-panel folding screens held by the Kanedani family of Fukui City (one painting was attached to each panel of the screens). Presently, it has been dismounted from the screens and has become a set of twelve hanging scrolls. These scrolls have been divided up into various collections including that of the Tokyo National Museum. They are believed to have been produced during Matabei's Fukui period.*

[3] *Originally paintings on paper mounted on one eight-panel folding screen held by the Ikeda family, leaders of the Okayama Clan. Also known as the Sonshitsu Screen. Presently, this has also been separated into eight hanging scrolls.*

Illustration 4. "Self-portrait of Matabei."
Collection of Atami Museum of Art.

trunks like slime. In a powerful example of his late work, The Cultivation Screen (in the collection of Mr. Uji'ie, Illustration 5), the growing trees shake ever so slightly back and forth, seeming unstable and fractured, and a disturbing expression, like some sort of living creature, seems to be hidden among them.

In his pictures exists "a kind of indescribable remoteness" and "a dull horror." These are qualities that Mr. Tanaka Kisaku indicated, thereby partially provoking a debate about Matabei that I will later discuss. They are appropriate descriptions, I believe.

Illustration 5. "The Cultivation Screen," detail. Collection of Mr. Uji'ie.

Illustration 6. "Hitomaro Eigu." Collection of Atami Museum of Art.

Illustration 7. "Laozi Crossing the River," detail. Collection of Tokyo National Museum.

The second element is that, while dealing with classical, traditional themes, he seems to replace the subject matter with vulgar, contemporary topics. This is an element that ought to be described as that of so-called *korobi-ai-e* ("fooling around" pictures). The diptych "Hitomaro Eigu and Ki no Tsurayuki" (Illustration 6) includes a simplified, black-ink portrait of the distinguished poet Hitomaro with a facial expression as if he's

pretending not to notice a woman's bare legs, epitomizes this characteristic. Also, the Chinese immortal in "Laozi Crossing the River" (formerly "the Kanedani Folding Screen," Illustration 7) is depicted as an odd eccentric, and the "Image of a Dragon," with his nose hairs growing long and his comical look, seem to have similar function. In "the Genji Monogatari Picture" (formerly "the Kanedani Folding Screen"), a scene in which Genji holds a court lady in his arms on a dimly moonlit night and carries her to the bedroom. I have never before seen this kind of blatant depiction. These images take classical imagery and pull it down to the status of contemporary genre painting.

The third element is the eccentric characteristic that runs throughout his depiction of figures. The noblemen and noblewomen who appear in his pictures all have swollen cheeks and long chins. The so-called ***hôgyô chôi*** ("swollen cheeks and long chins") are indicated. However, he exaggerated not only upon parts of the figure's face, but also their arms, legs, general body shape, and clothing – all the various parts of a figure's expression – and this gives Matabei's figures an extremely eye-catching presence. In "The Strong Priest Honjôbô" (*Honjôbô Shinriku-zu*), let us take as an example the shape of Honjôbô's legs, with his legs firmly planted as he makes a tremendous effort to pick up a giant boulder (Illustration 8). The toes of his right foot are bizarre things that are bent like the legs of a crab, and with his left leg, the calf is blown up, taking on the shape of a spindle, and the toes are extremely warped, making me think of the "gourd legs" often painted by artists of the Torii school. It's an extremely eccentric shape, and this is very similar to what we find in other works by Matabei.

Of course, we cannot entirely connect the characteristics of this kind of figurative expression to Matabei's creativity. In handscrolls from the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, we find what we could call the origin of these forms. However, we must not overlook the fact that his particular conception of these forms derived from classical origins changes them into an entirely different, individualized system of expression.

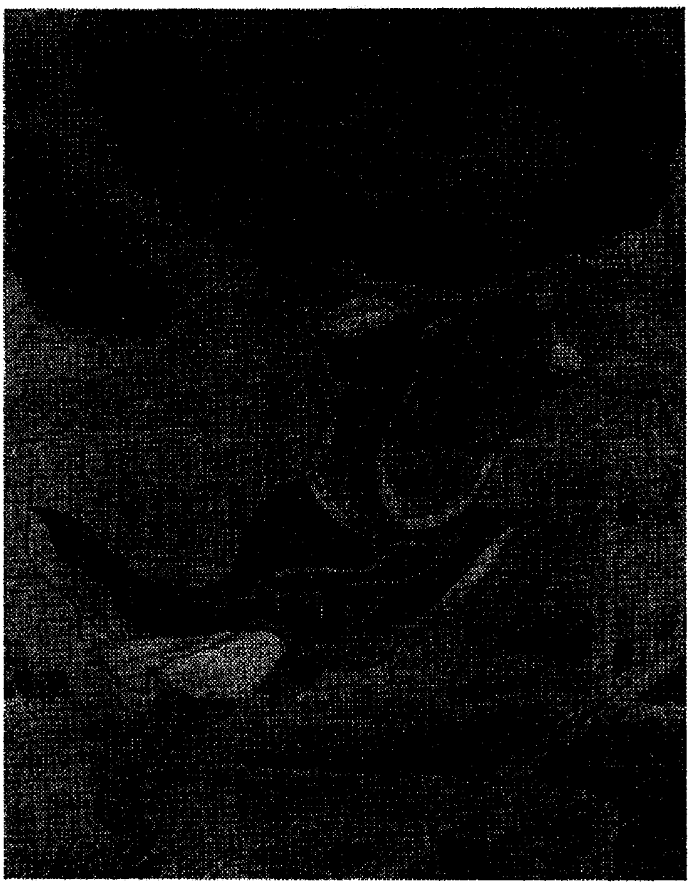


Illustration 8. "The Strong Priest Honjôbô," detail. Collection of Tokyo National Museum.

In these ways, the standard artworks of Matabei are extremely rich in unique qualities, but even if they are contemporary *parodies* of classical imagery, they are not genre paintings of beauties that copy, as Hanabusa Icchô put it, "'dancing girls' in contemporary, fashionable attire." However, Icchô said that people called the artist "Ukiyo Matabei" for painting those kinds of pictures. Even in the book *Iwasa Kafu* (*The Genealogy of the Iwasa Family*), written around the same time, one finds the passage:

> *He copied figures in a new way, with aspects that his predecessors had never painted, and in his departure from the social norm, he forms a family of his own. People call him Ukiyo Matabei.*

Could this really be true? Since no genre paintings of beauties that are definitely attributed to Matabei have ever been found, it's natural that room for doubt concerning this point remains. The discovery of "Tokiwa in the Mountains" by Mr. Hasegawa Minokichi, who I mentioned before and that enormous exhibition sets an immeasurably intense fire to this problem.

The truly fateful encounter with "Tokiwa in the Mountains" is due entirely to the frantic efforts of the inspired Mr. Hasegawa. His devotion at that time to the handscroll did not stop with the enormous exhibitions in Kyoto and Tokyo; he watched over it even to the extent of distributing reproductions of the entire, enormous scroll.

Haruyama Takematsu (1885-1962), an art historian removed from the political sphere and a friend of Mr. Hasegawa, wrote an article printed in the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* newspaper saying that he is confident that "Tokiwa in the Mountains" is a large work from Matabei's middle period. It is needless to say that Mr. Hasegawa agreed with this opinion. However, to pour cold water over their convictions, Fujikake Shizuya (1881-1958), seen as an authority on ukiyo-e, submitted an article entitled "'Hikone Screen' and 'Tokiwa in the Mountains' Are Not Works by Matabei" in the *Kokumin Shinbun* newspaper. In addition, Mr. Sasagawa Rinpu (1870-1949) presented a negative opinion in the magazine *Nation of Beauty* (*Bi no Kuni*). In response to this, Mr. Haruyama presented a long dissertation entitled *Matabei Ronsô no Kachu e* (*Into the Tornado of the Matabei Debate*), in which, by means of a detailed comparative analysis with every idea from color, figures, a bibliography, and style, he took the position that *"Tokiwa in the Mountains,"* "The Tale of Horie" (the fragments in the collection of Mr. Murayama and Mr. Furumori), and "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" were all by "Ukiyo Matabei."

This kind of affirmative judgment merely escalated the number of negative judgments. In Mr. Fujikake's lifework, *Ukiyo-e Research* (*Ukiyo-e no kenkyû*) (published in Showa 18 / 1946), he took the trouble of including a chapter, entitled "Regarding the Explanation of Iwasa Matabei as the Founder of Ukiyo-e," on the subject, and in this, he says that in "Tokiwa in the Mountains" and "The Tale of Princess Jôruri,"

"the brushwork is extremely radical," and he regards it as a work painted by a town painter who had adopted Matabei's style. Matabei did not paint the genre pictures so popular at the time, he states, and accordingly, he concludes that it is a mistake that Matabei was the founder of ukiyo-e. Beforehand, Mr. Tanaka Kisaku, a central authority in the academic community, also expressed doubts about the authenticity of "Ukiyo Matabei." He claimed that there was a remarkable difference between "Tokiwa in the Mountains" and the works of Matabei based on the rhythm of lines, the balance of colors, the presence of elegance. He contradicted Mr. Haruyama, presenting the opinion that this was the work of Matabei's descendant. As one might expect, these arguments by Mr. Fujikake and Mr. Tanaka had a much stronger influence than the explanation of Mr. Haruyama, who is unaffiliated with the government. For example, the article on "Iwasa Matabei" in the World Encyclopedia (*Sekkai Daihyakkajiten*) published by Heibonsha states, "Traditionally believed to be the founder of the genre of *ukiyo-e*, but now that lineage has been completely denied.... Not a single genre painting in the *ukiyo-e* style was produced by him." The outcome of the debate was obvious.

However, is there that much evidence to support these negative arguments? Now that most of these participants in the debate have passed away, the fact is that doubt about the conclusion of this debate has been intensifying among scholars.

I have previously indicated that the artworks that I have labeled collectively as the "Old *Jôruri* Handscroll Set" have a tendency to express figures in an extremely peculiar way. Mr. Haruyama demonstrated with very detailed data the indisputable fact that those exact same peculiar characteristics are found in the standard works of Matabei. Those scholars who defended the counter argument could not help but accept this point, yet while the supporters of the affirmative argument all agreed with this theory, those who defended the counter argument interpreted the artwork as products of the later school of Matabei or as some town painter's rendition in Matabei's style. Ultimately, at the root of the counter argument was the premise that such a "radical" and heretical work as "Tokiwa in the Mountains" was impossible to handle.

Compared to Matabei's standard works, are the works in the "Old *Jôruri* Handscroll Set" so remarkably different? Certainly, perhaps that kind of designation is correct for works such as *Oguri*. However, can we also say that about "Tokiwa in the Mountains" and the Murayama / Furumori versions of *"The Tale of Horie,"* supposedly painted by Artist X, the leader of "the Yamanaka workshop"? Even in the masterpiece *Court Ladies Looking at Chrysanthemums* (*Kanjô Kangiku-zu*) from the former Kanedani folding screen (Plate 8), in which court ladies gently lift the reed blinds of their Imperial carriage and appreciate the chrysanthemums, is painted in the *yamato-e* style with delicate, white lines. Let us now compare this painting to a section of the scene in the fourth volume of "Tokiwa in the Mountains" where Tokiwa and her attendant are stripped of their clothes (Plate 3). Perhaps the scholars subscribing to the counter argument would at this point emphasize the difference in "the rhythm of lines" and "the presence of elegance." However, can one look at the form of the women's heads and faces, as well as the rhythm of the lines that describe the women's fingertips, hair, and chins, and say that these were painted by the brush of a totally different artist? This is not my only evidence. We must not overlook the fact that, in the faces of the court ladies who are appreciating the chrysanthemums, any kind of lewd expression is hidden. Had the figures been painted in a more vulgar light, the women would have flung aside their classical presence and more blatantly and unreservedly displayed their figures. Aren't hints of lewdness obviously absent from the images of Tokiwa and her attendant as well?

Also, in Matabei's standard works, the kind of eerie atmosphere that Mr. Tanaka Kisaku called "a dull horror" often exists deep within the pictures. This is connected to the monomaniac expression found in all the works of "the Yamanaka workshop." Elements such as the seriously sinister atmosphere that radiates from the scene in "Tokiwa in the Mountains" in which Tokiwa is murdered, or the interest in gaudy atrocities shown in the scene where Ushiwaka disposes of the thieves' corpses, or the unusual bloodiness in the battle scene of "The Tale of Horie" can be thought of the slime of dark pathos restrained within Matabei's standard works finding opportunities for

expression and exposing itself without reservation. The strange coexistence of vulgarity and humor, sort of like a dirty joke, is also found in the standard works.

Based on these reasons, I presume that, while Iwasa Matabei painted the official "standard works," he also presided over the "Yamanaka workshop," run by several professional painters, in which old *jôruri* scripts were used as texts in the production of enormous handscrolls. The headquarters of this colorful, underground workshop - now we ought to call it "the Matabei workshop" – was probably originally in Kyoto, but during Matabei's residence in Fukui, as one might expect, it was thought to have been in Fukui. One piece of evidence lies in the history of the Matsudaira family. After Matsudaira Tadanao's banishment, his true child Mitsunaga took territory from the Takeda family, and the Matsudaira family became the head of the Tsuyama Clan. Within that family, both "Tokiwa in the Mountains" and "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" were passed along from one generation to the next.

It seems that this "Matabei workshop" produced not only handscrolls but many genre paintings that were popular at the time. One piece of evidence supporting this claim is "the Hôkoku Saireizu Byôbu" ("Folding Screen of the Festival at Hôkoku Shrine"), originally owned by the Hachisuga family, and currently in the collection of the Tokugawa Renmeikai (Plate 7). It depicts an extremely thriving festival held in the 9th year of the Keichô era (1604) in commemoration of the seventh anniversary of (Toyotomi) Hideyoshi's death. A separate work with the same composition, "Hôkoku Reizu Byôbu" ("Folding Screen of the Festival at Hôkoku Shrine"), painted by Kanô Naizen (1570-1616), depicts Hôkoku Shrine, but the moods of the two works are quite different. That is to say, while the latter work was painted with the serious intent of faithfully recording for the sake of posterity the elaborate rituals of the festival, it is believed that the former work is not so worried about doing that.

Let us look at the line of people in front of the tomb (*otamaya*) as depicted in the right screen. In comparison to this neatly ordered line at the outer gate in Naizen's painting, in the Renmeikan painting, since the main gate from which people are supposed to enter is not painted, it is unclear why people are shown in this work to be standing in a

line. A horse is crying out as if it had gone crazy, and the people, on the verge of falling into a panic, are terribly confused and disordered. In the upper left corner, a few kabuki players are shown in the middle of a gaudy quarrel and scuffle. In the left screen, the condition of the street in front of the Daibutsuden, while Naizen painted it as quite bustling as well, in the Renmeikan painting, we can only call the scene insanely wild. A roadside spectacle shaded with reed blinds, in which a young performer holds a woman in his arms, is casually painted, and the artist's bitter eyes focus relentlessly upon the behavior of innumerable untouchable beggars who have gathered at the interior of the Daibutsuden (Illustration 9). Here, the "magnificent festival" that the artist was supposed to commemorate is transformed into a disorderly, sordid, farcical performance. Among early genre paintings, this is one of the works that display an extremely unique pictorial space. Innumerable characters – several thousands – are painted in gaudy primary colors, and everything, including the costumes of the figures, is covered in gold and silver decorations, burying the entire folding screen. In the strangely flat pictorial space, they violently bump up against each other, and they mix together in a diagonal pattern, creating a whirlwind or a convection. A shocking excess of decoration, as seen in the first half of "The Tale of Princess Jôruri," is here accompanied by passionate movement.

Incidentally, the extremely obstinate way in which figures in this folding screen are depicted is certainly the "Matabei style." In particular, in several kinds of facial appearances of characters in "The Tale of Princess Jôruri" perfectly match with those of the characters in the Renmeikai screen, as if the faces in both were painted using the same pattern. It may be wrong to profess that both works were made by the same artist, but at the very least, they are undoubtedly works produced in the same workshop. The Matabei workshop left behind unique, fashionable genre paintings like this one.

Mr. Fujikake and Mr. Tanaka never explored important documents that discuss Matabei's adoption of the nickname "Ukiyo Matabei." Only twenty-five years after Matabei's death, in the third year of the Enpô era (1675), Kurokawa Dôyû (1622?-1691), an erudite Confucianist, wrote the following article in the newspaper *Enbeki Kenki*:

Kanô Misuke was an apprentice of the professional painter Sanraku from the time period of Hideyoshi's rule, and he ended up becoming a painter himself. Also, in addition to Ukiyo Matabei, there was a fellow named Matagotô Sahei... Ukiyo Matabei was the son of Mr. Araki. He lived in Echizen. He visited Lord Tadanao. Then he lived in Edo and served Fukutomi Ritsui. I remember this well...

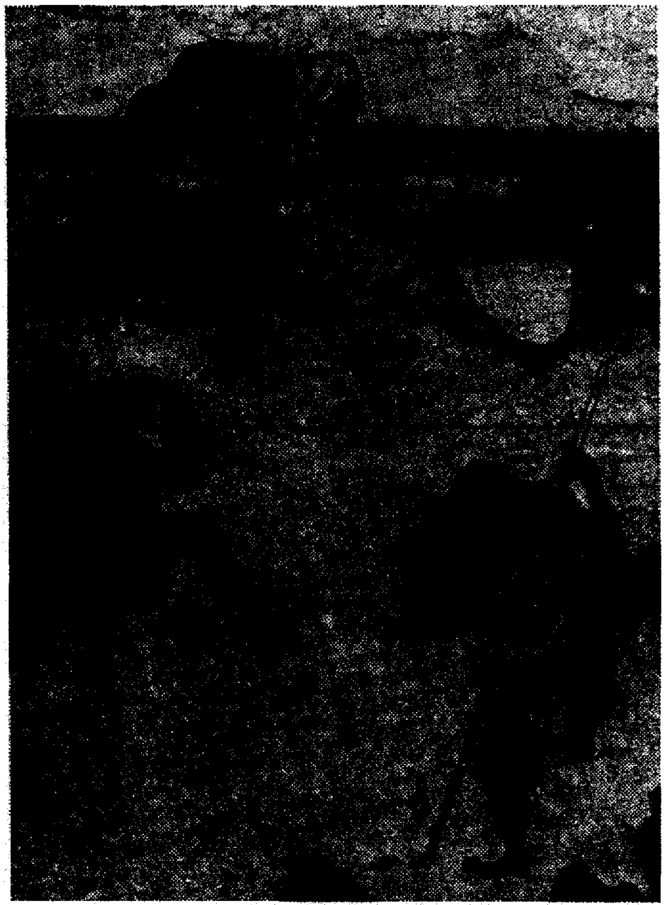


Illustration 9. "Folding Screen of the Festival at Hôkoku Shrine," detail. Collection of Tokugawa Renmeikai.

Even when looking in books and articles published at that time, to ascertain the existence of the person Kanô Misuke and the painter named Gotô Sahei that appear here, the memory of the elder Fukutomi Ritsui seems trustworthy, and if you interpret it directly that Matabei was called Ukiyo Matabei during his lifetime, an unquestionable piece of evidence arises. His workshop not only made "the old *jôruri* handscroll set" and Hôkoku Saizu Byôbu, but also in the field of genre paintings of beauties and perhaps in that of *higiga* (erotic works) as well, he certainly produced stylish, novel works.

The era from the Genna through the Kan'ei period was the period of new development for genre paintings, and here I would like to consider the reason why Matabei was called "Ukiyo Matabei."

Matabei was certainly not the only artist to breathe fresh life into genre painting at that time. For example, "Rakuchu Rakugai-zu Byôbu" ("The Folding Screen of Scenes in and around the Capitol") in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum illustrates the active lifestyles of the residents of Kyoto at the end of the Keichô era (1596-1615), and by means of the vigorous curiosity and satirical spirit it embodies, especially represents the pleasurable aspects of life in Kyoto. It possesses art historical meaning as a forerunner in a new trend in genre painting, and moreover, from the fact that the figures are represented in a peculiar way closely resembling the style of Matabei, I'm tempted to guess that it might be a work from Matabei's Kyoto period, but this frank portrayal overflowing with the rustic charm of the painted figures is too disconnected from his internal endowment. Rather, I'd like to think that this is an anonymous work who should be regarded as a member of "the school of Matabei." Even the famous work "the Hikone Screen" that is reputed to be a work of Matabei, when analyzing the painting style, it seems to be a so-called *uragei* (private artwork) by a master of the Kanô school at that time; it is clearly not a work by Matabei.

Nevertheless, the innumerable, colorful artworks that were secretly produced by the "Matabei workshop" in Fukui, whether they be handscrolls like "The Tale of Princess Jôruri," or whether they be fashionable genre paintings of beauties, because of the fresh, disorienting vulgarity of his new, fashionable depiction of "figures… with aspects that his predecessors had never painted," we viewers are undoubtedly given intense insight into the "floating world." Because of this, it is thought that the fame and painting style of nearby "Ukiyo Matabei" was re-imported, and in addition, he was called to Edo, which lacked painters at that time. And the new trend in genre painting that Matabei promoted even in Edo developed a reputation among samurai and *chonin*; this was the prelude to the later birth of "Ukiyo-e" by Moronobu and others. This is the surprisingly suggestive reasoning of Fujioka Sakutarô (in his book *The History of Early Modern Painting* [*Kinsei Kaiga-shi*]). Thinking along these lines leads one to realize that the theory of Matabei being the founder of the genre of *ukiyo-e* is not entirely unfounded. At the very least, he was unquestionably one of several founders.

In the article from *Enbeki Kenki* that I previously quoted, the author said that Matabei "met with" Tadanao in Echizen.

Tadanao, as we all know, was Ieyasu's grandson, and while a famous figure in the Shinpan (the clan of Tokugawa relatives) who governed the 680,000 *koku* of Echizen, because of that flagrant "rebellion," in the ninth year of the Genna era, by order of the military government, he was exiled to Hagiwara City in Bungo province (modern day Oita prefecture). Using this unusual incident as material, Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948) wrote a famous novel, *Tadanao Kyôjôki* (*The Behavior of Lord Tadanao*), and in it, he explains that the riot was a rebellion against the inhuman treatment of subjects by the lords. This is, needless to say, no more than one literary interpretation, and it is believed that more complex political factors were involved in sparking the incident.

Tadanao's father, Yûki Hideyasu (1574-1607), as Hidetada's older brother, was essentially supposed to become the second generation shogun after Ieyasu, but when he was an infant, he was sent by Ieyasu to Hideyoshi, who adopted him, and the adoption was more like a kidnapping. In this way, he had an unfortunate childhood, and he was walled up inside the castle at Ichizen. As the Ichizen family was "a royal family outside the range of the law," these circumstances attracted attention from the military government. Hideyasu's behavior towards Tadanao was overlooked. It is said that, as his brother-in-law, Hideyori took a sympathetic position, but it seems that Tadanao's behavior deeply bothered the shogunate.

Tadanao, who had been abused by Hideyasu, fought with Toyotomi and others, but being a youth, his behavior was understandable. Meanwhile, he also had ambitions of becoming a leader, and even though he proved his loyalty to the military government, the shogunate's refusal to reward his loyalty was said to have been extremely unfair. Later, he claimed to be sick, and laid about while visitors came to see him, constantly displaying a rebellious attitude towards the shogunate. He fell in love with a beautiful woman by the name of Ikokujo, and for no good reason, committed misconduct such as murdering vassals and common people. Because he was flagrantly revolting against the

government, the shogunate, the members of which couldn't bear to watch his behavior, decided to exile him. The legends regarding his misconduct, which included tearing open the belly of an expectant mother, may have been generally fashioned by the Chinese government, or perhaps they should merely be the subject of ethnologists specializing in folklore. On the other hand, from the second year of the Genna era, he became involved in the business he inherited from his father, the development of a bird fields. Apparently, he achieved good results and was beloved by settlers. Upon thinking about these facts, a relatively strong interpretation of the reasons for his exile is that Tadanao was destined to replace Hideyasu as shogun, yet his emotionally defiant attitude towards the military government led to his exile, so that the shogunate-clan system could be strengthened.

However, when he was exiled, in a letter he left behind, he wrote:

Nothing more or less than hell awaits me in the near future.
I look at this present fruit (of my actions)
I sit, thinking deeply about the future.

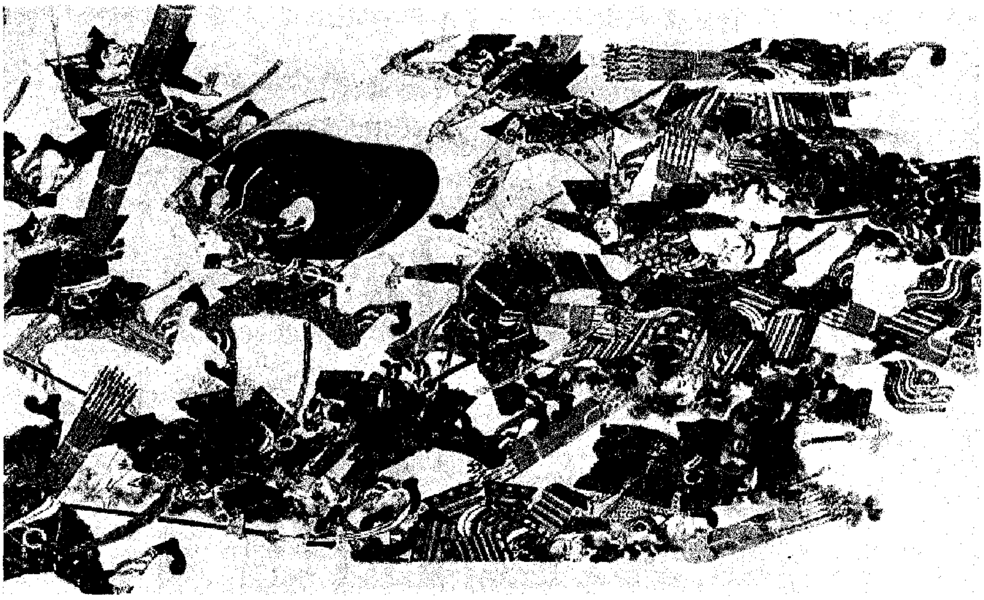
Seeing these words, as if he were preparing himself to fall into hell in the world beyond, I cannot think that there is no factual basis to the stories that, to clear his heart of his agonizing grief, he indulged in liquor and women, and occasionally, his temper even reached the point of bloody, devilish behavior.

I believe that "Tokiwa in the Mountains" was produced in the first half of Matabei's Fukui period – that is to say, it is a work from the time when he "met Tadanao." (The Murayama/Furumori versions of "The Tale of Horie" are stylized, and were painted before "Tokiwa in the Mountains." It is presumed that they were painted between the end of the Keichô era and the beginning of the Genna era. There is a possibility that these were also works he painted soon after arriving in Fukui, but we lack essential details, I would like to abstain from guessing beyond this point.) If this is so, then this artwork, overflowing with a radical, bloody interest in atrocity, the secret of Matabei's bloody birth, and Tadanao's self-abandoning behavior strangely overlapped

amidst the social conditions of the Genna Peace (*Genna enbu*), formed a trinity of voluptuous blood.

Perhaps Tadanao's praise of Matabei's genius upon seeing "Tokiwa in the Mountains" is one of the acts of "misconduct" that he attempted.

Chapter One
The Grief-Filled World & the Floating World: Iwasa Matabei
Plates



1. "The Tale of Horie," The Revenge Attack. Collection of Mr. Furumori.

2. "The Tale of Princess Jôruri," Scroll 4, Seeing the Figure of the Princess. Atami Museum of Art.

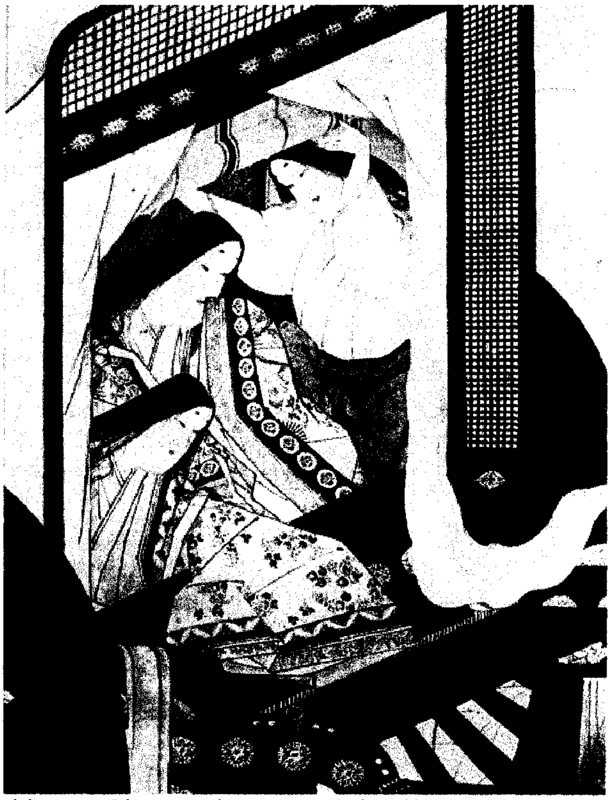
3. "Tokiwa in the Mountains," Scroll 4, Tokiwa and her lady chamberlain, stripped of their clothes. Itami Museum of Art.

4. "Tokiwa in the Mountains," Scroll 8, Ushiwaka lures the thieves. Itami Museum of Art.

5. “Tokiwa in the Mountains,” Scroll 10, Wrapping the bodies of the thieves in bamboo mats. Itami Museum of Art.

6. “Dragon,” detail, Tokyo National Museum.

7. "Festival at Hôkoku Shrine," left screen, detail, Tokugawa Renmeikai.



8. "Court Ladies Looking at Chrysanthemums," detail, Yamatane Museum of Art.

Chapter Two
Convulsions of the Enormous Momoyama Tree: Kanô Sansetsu

Upon looking at the works he left behind, one finds many paintings whose style is extremely different from that of his father Sanraku and which surprise ordinary people.

From *Biographies of Japanese Painters* (*Fusôga Jinden*)

Here is a pair of strange portraits. Kanô Sanraku and his child Sansetsu, painted by Kimura Kôsetsu, a painter at the end of the Edo era. It is said that the original sketch of Sanraku was done by Sansetsu and that Sansetsu's portrait was originally drawn by his son Einô, but these drawings no longer exist. (Illustration 10)

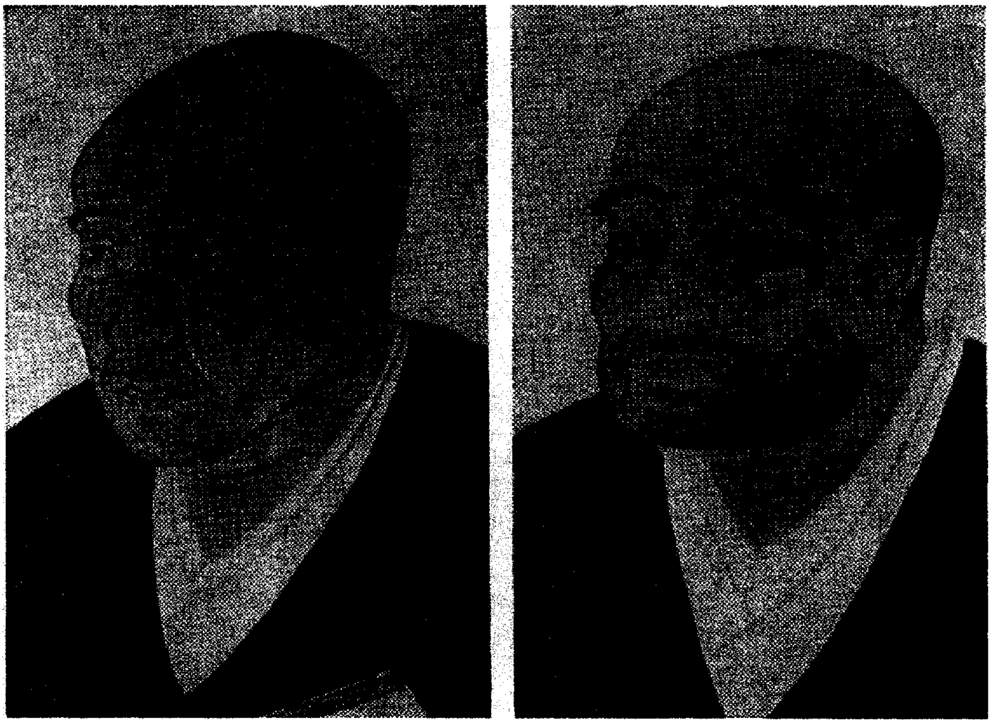


Illustration 10. Portraits of Kanô Sansetsu (left) and Kanô Sanraku (right). (Copied by Kimura Kôsetsu.)

I don't know anything about physiognomy, but to the extent that I can analyze these portraits, I think that the rugged, sturdy face of Sanraku painted here hints at his endurance, warmth and steadfastness. By contrast, in Sansetsu's narrow face there is a look of uncompromising cold-heartedness and arrogance. Behind this striking contrast in the facial features of father and son lies the fact that Sansetsu was not Sanraku's natural son but was rather adopted by him, yet nevertheless Sanraku seems to have adopted someone whose personality does not really fit his own. What is interesting is that the appearance of each man, so different from the other's, perfectly matches the characteristics of his individual painting style.

Before talking about Sansetsu, I need to mention about his teacher Sanraku. Kanô Sanraku was, alongside Kanô Eitoku, Hasegawa Tôhaku and Kaihô Yûshô, one of the four big artists of the Momoyama era. It is said that his career as a painter began when Hideyoshi, who he served as an attendant, noticed Sanraku's extraordinary painting ability and ordered Kanô Eitoku to take him on as an apprentice. In the 18th year of the Tenshô era (1590), when Eitoku passed away at the age of 48, Sanraku was 32 years old. Considering how, even as an apprentice, Sanraku was permitted to use the Kanô family name, one realizes how much he was trusted by Eitoku in the last years of the teacher's life. In fact, among the painters in the Kanô school after Eitoku's death, he was the only one who could achieve that revolutionary design of partition paintings (*shôheki-ga*; folding screen paintings and sliding-door paintings), particularly that extraordinary, life-size depiction of enormous trees, which seems to bring into an interior space the wild, blooming energy of nature in all its majesty. In addition, he was the one who assumed the heavy responsibility as head of the family.

The death of Hideyoshi in the 3rd year of the Keichô era (1598) and the battle of Sekigahara that followed led to a delicate transition in the political situation of the country, and it became necessary for the Kanô family to think about how to manage this change. Eitoku's eldest son Mitsunobu immediately responded to the order of the Tokugawa family and headed to Edo, and Takanobu, the second son, began to work for

the Imperial court. Meanwhile, Sanraku, whose obligations to Hideyoshi were particularly deep, stayed in Osaka to serve as a painter for the Toyotomi family. The Kanô family, in other words, decided upon a multifaceted strategy, as if it didn't matter into whose hands power fell. Ultimately, this plan was successful and the status of the Kanô family was preserved, but among the members of the family, Sanraku was the one whose choice doomed him to poverty.

In the 20th year of the Keichô era (1615), Lord Toyotomi perished amidst the flames of Osaka Castle. For a while, Sanraku hid himself away on Mount Otokoyama, but through the intervention of his acquaintance, Shôkadô Shôjô (1584-1639), he was pardoned by the Tokugawa family and resumed his duty of producing paintings as a member of the Kanô school. However, Sanraku was not employed as a painter by the military government of Edo, as Takanobu's sons Tanyû and Naonobu were, and thereafter, Sanraku's descendants remained in Kyoto, generation after generation, resigned to being treated as a subsidiary branch of the Kanô school. As opposed to the Kanô painters in Edo such as Tanyû and Naonobu, Sanraku's descendants are referred to as the Kyoto Kanô school.

In the 12th year of the Kan'ei Era (1635), Sanraku passed away at the age of 77.

I have already touched upon the way in which Sanraku's abilities were suitable for perpetuating Eitoku's large-scale painting style. More than anything else, the magnificent depiction of enormous trees found in "Pine Tree and Hawk" (*Suiboku Shôyô-zu*) (Illustration 11) at Seishinden Hall of Daikakuji Temple, a work that is assumed to have been produced sometime from the Keichô era (1596 – 1615) through the Genna era (1615 – 1624), and "Red Prunus" (*Kimbyaku Kôbaizu*), located in the same hall, speak eloquently in support of this view of the artist. After Eitoku's death, the entire painting community, including the Kanô school, gave up speaking in flattering terms about the bizarre (*kaikai kiki*) images that Eitoku produced during his late years and began to pursue more carefully arranged, graceful, decorative forms.

This aesthetic change was partially in response to the policies that were put into effect by the Tokugawa military government that turned to the establishment of a new, isolationist feudal order after the battle of Sekigahara.

Sanraku was the only one who did not participate in this trend. He preserved the grandeur and vitality of paintings of enormous trees, which were the origins of his teacher and which we should truly call monuments to the spirit of the Momoyama era. He was, if you will, the last remaining masters of the Momoyama era. However, when the unusual painting style of the adopted Sansetsu caught his eye in his later years, he surely must have felt that his own era was already coming to an end.

Illustration 11. Kanô Sanraku, "Pine Tree and Hawk," detail. Collection of Seishinden hall at Daikakuji temple.

Sansetsu led a conventional, unexceptional life in the shadow of adoptive father Sanraku's fame. Mr. Doi Tsugiyoshi, however, has recently arranged the standard works of Sansetsu that bear his signature and seal. Using the particular, individualistic painting style found in those works as clues, Mr. Doi visited locations around Kyoto such as Tenkyûin Temple and analyzed sliding doors and folding screens that have long been attributed to Sanraku. Quite a large number of these works, Mr. Doi revealed, were painted by Sansetsu. Mr. Doi's research has furthermore provided a large amount of material about Sansetsu's biography.

Sansetsu was born in Hizen Province (modern-day Saga and Nagasaki prefectures) in the 18th year of the Tensei Era (1590), the year that Kanô Eitoku died. His childhood name was Hikozô. For some reason, his father Senga Dôgen left Hizen and moved to Osaka. It is said that, from the time of his early childhood, Hikozô liked to draw, and even if his father told him to stop, he wouldn't listen. In the 10th year of the Keichô Era (1605), when he was 16 years old, his father Dôgen passed away. Because of this, he was placed under the care of his uncle, a monk whose name we do not know, and thereafter he became Sanraku's apprentice. It seems that his teacher gradually realized his amazing aptitude as an artist. He soon married his teacher's eldest daughter Take, received the name of Kanô, and changed his personal name (*na*) to Heishirô. Later, Heishirô was called Nuinosuke and maintained that name up until the time he took the artist name (*gô*) of Sansetsu. Late in his life, as an artist of the Kanô school, he adopted the peculiar literati-style pen-names (*gagô*) of Jasoku Ken, Togenshi and Shôhaku Sanjin.

It is thought that from the second half of the Genna era (1615 – 1624) through the first year of the Kan'ei era (1624), a period during which Sanraku one again began to participate in the art community, Sansetsu worked as his assistant and developed, little by little, into a self-sufficient painter. Around the 6th year of the Kan'ei era (1629), Sansetsu led the production of one section of the three handscrolls for *The History of Taimaji Temple (Taimaji Engi)* (in the collection of Mr. Noshi), a project executed primarily by Kanô artists such as Tanyû. This is the earliest example of his work, and shortly

thereafter, in the 8th year of the Kan'ei era (1631), as I will discuss later, he helped the aged Sanraku and played an important role in the production of partition paintings *(shôhekiga)* for Myôshinji Tenkyuin. In the 9th year of Kan'ei (1632), he produced 21 portrait scrolls of many saints and sages such as Fuxi (Japanese: Fukugi 伏義) and Confucius (Japanese: Kôshi 孔子) for the Hayashi School (*Hayashi-shi Gakumonjo*) founded by Mr. Ueno Shinobugaoka.

Sanraku had one child late in his life. His name was Mitsunori. However, Mitsunori, unlike his father, displayed mediocre art talent, and on top of that, he died at the young age of 21 while his father was still alive. Therefore, in the 12th year of Kan'ei (1635), when Sanraku passed away, Sansetsu became his successor. At that time, Sansetsu was 46 years old. Two years later, in the 14th year of Kan'ei (1637), Sansetsu painted the large-scale work "Votive Picture of a Roped Horse" *(Keiba-zu Ema)* at Kiyomizudera Shrine. In addition, in the 4th year of the Shôho Era (1647), at the age of 58, through the intercession of Kujô Tadahide (1586-1665), Sansetsu repaired 2 of the 33 portraits of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara which were painted by Minchô and passed on to Tôfukuji Temple, and in honor of this service, he received from the Imperial Court the so-called honorary title of painters, ***hokkyô***.[1]

In August of the same year, that is to say, in the month when he was conferred the title of ***hokkyô***, Sansetsu painted the majestic, powerful "Dragon in the Clouds" on the ceiling of Sennyûji Shari-den Temple. Four years later, on the 12th day of the 3rd month in the 4th year of the Keian era (1651), his life came to an end at the age of 62.

Notable within Sansetsu's social sphere was a group of Confucianists led by Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619) and including Fujiwara's pupils Hayashi Razan (1587 – 1657), Hori Kyôan (1585 – 1642) and Naba Kassho (1595 – 1648). It seems that Sansetsu himself possessed by nature a scholarly side to his personality. He detested having to deal with the common world; he was the type of person who would shut himself away in his house and think only about painting. He was well-versed in the Chinese classics, loved to read biographies of Chinese painters, and he was extremely

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[1] Translator's note: literally, "Bridge of the Law."

knowledgeable about the field of Chinese painting. He was also familiar with historical facts about China.

When a painter depicted historical and legendary Chinese figures, he would often indicate the artist's mistakes in detail and correct the appearance. He was skilled at appraising old paintings and copies of paintings from the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties, and he was also very knowledgeable about the biographies of Japanese painters. His son Einô later published *History of Japanese Art* (*Honchô Gashi*), Japan's first collection of biographies about painters, and according the afterword written by Einô, it is an edited work based upon the biographies of more than 100 painters of Japan as they appeared in the manuscript that Sansetsu left when he died.

This is an outline of Sansetsu's biography, the so-called official record drawn mainly from the "Preface to the Scroll Paintings Inherited by Kanô Einô." The document that I will introduce next, however, tells of a surprising incident that affected the elderly Sansetsu.

This is a letter written on a small scrap of paper and sent by Sansetsu from prison to Einô (in the collection of Mr. Suzuka Sanshichi, Illustration 12).[2]

As it says on the envelope ("Private document by Sansetsu"), this was secretly sent from within the prison to Einô. "The oracles of the three shrines" (*sanja takusen*) are the oracles of Ise, Hachiman, and Harujitsu shrines who relate to the virtues of honesty, purity and mercy, respectively. While in prison, Sansetsu had a dream about the oracle of purity, but since he could not remember which of the three shrines this related to, he told Einô to find out.[3] He asks Einô to pray to the spirit of Awataguchi at the shrine of the Great God Amaterasu, to the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman at the Hachiman shrine on Mount Otokoyama, and to the god Kasuga at the shrine found within the estate of the Imperial Palace in Kujô district.

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[2] Translator's note: Tsuji transcribes the contents of the letter in classical Japanese and then carefully paraphrases it in modern Japanese. In order to avoid redundancy, an English translation of the transcription has been omitted here. The letter is signed "Shôhaku" and dated the 4th day of the 10th month.
[3] Translator's note: Tsuji mentions that the oracle was from the shrine of the Great God Amaterasu at Ise, but Sansetsu himself does not realize this.

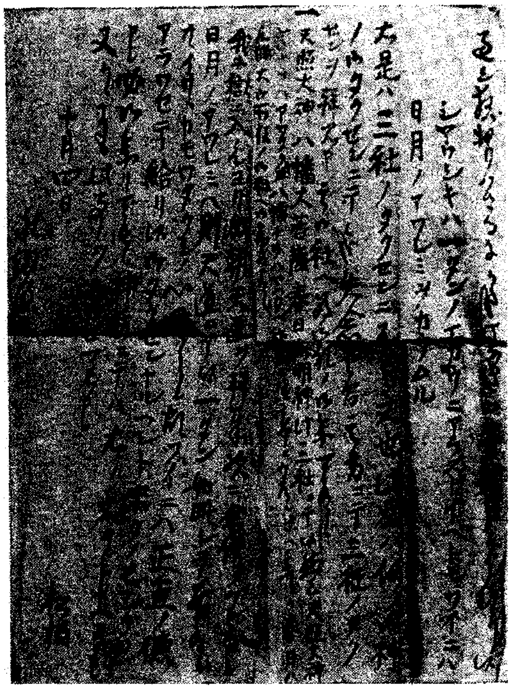

Illustration 12. Kanô Sansetsu, Letter from prison. Collection of Mr. Suzuka.

From the time he entered the prison, every morning he prayed to heaven and then chanted the Nenbutsu. Ultimately, he trusts that his dream of the oracle communicated to the gods the purity and honesty within his heart. In letters to her, Sansetsu made this same request to his mother as well. The contents of his letters show the intensity with which he brooded over these thoughts throughout his imprisonment.

In short, what one wonders after reading this letter is, what were the charges and reasons for suddenly imprisoning the aged Sansetsu, who had received the title of *hokkyô* and who seemed to have risen to fame? We still do not know what kind of crime it was. At the very least, Sansetsu himself seemed to have believed in his innocence, but some question still remains about whether he was freed of charges and return safely home, as he believed he would. If so, it is believed that Einô would have had no reason to keep this secret note from prison, which we should consider as an appeal of innocence, in his possession until his death. Perhaps Sansetsu died in prison. Even if he was released before his death, it is easy to imagine that this incident resulted in shortening his life.[4]

Why did this kind of tragedy occur to Sansetsu in his old age? At this time, since we do not know what the crime was, we can only guess. If one was to go by the contents

[4] In the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute in the United States, there is a landscape painting of the four seasons that bears the signature "Kanô Hokkyû Sansetsu at the Final Age of 62" as well as the seals "Kinmon Gashi" and "Sansetsu". If this was painted by Sansetsu himself, then he was eventually released from prison and died at home. However, the brush strokes are quiet and gentle, completely lacking his characteristics. From the qualities of the painting style, I presume that perhaps his son Einô painted it instead.

of his letter, he was innocent and fell into a trap somebody had set for him. However, no matter how truthful that may be, we are still left with the question of how he managed to develop such an enemy. It is thought to be a rather ironic conclusion that his unworldly nature might have led him to get tripped up in some worldly situation. Not only that, but he may also have had a narrow-mindedness that caused others to misunderstand and despise him. One thing that causes me to presume this is the imagery in his artwork.

As a result of Mr. Doi's investigation over several years, several dozen artworks made by Kanô Sansetsu, including those I have discussed here so far, have been identified. The painting formats include ceiling murals, votive tablets, partition paintings (*shôheiga*), and hanging scrolls, and his techniques include sumi ink and *kinpeki* (use of gold and blue pigment). He explored a wide variety of subjects ranging from landscapes and figures to *kachôga* (bird-and-flower paintings). These works testify to the breadth of Sansetsu's skill, which was equal to if not greater than that of Sanraku. In particular, we can say that, in large-scale works such as his ceiling murals, framed paintings and *shôheiga*, Sansetsu is often seen as the successor of Sanraku, who was enormously influential in these fields. When comparing the works of these two individuals, I must say that it is rare to find an example of a pair who, while sharing a relationship not only as teacher and student but also as adoptive father and son, possessed such essentially dissimilar styles.

Among Sansetsu's paintings, the ones in which we know the date of production are limited to those at the very end of his teacher's life, from the 6th year of the Kan'ei era (1629) (when Sansetsu was 40 years old). We also know that in the 10th year of the Kan'ei era (1633, when Sansetsu was 44 years old), he was known by the name of "Sansetsu" but we don't know exactly when he assumed the name. Accordingly, it is difficult to estimate what kind of painting style he had in his thirties, when it is thought that he actively helped his teacher in the production of paintings.

There are several clues, however, from which we can presume that the individuality that was so foreign to his teacher developed within Sansetsu quite early.

One such clue is the polychromatic painting on a pair of gilded, six-fold screens, "Huangshi and Zhang Liang"[5] and "The Three Laughers at Tiger Ravine" ("*Koseki Kô Chôryô*" and "*Kokei sanshô*;" in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum).

This work is a rare example of a gilded folding screen that bears the signature and seal of Sanraku, and formerly, it was judged from its superior workmanship to be the most standard of Sanraku's works. Mr. Doi Tsugiyoshi, however, noticed that the stiff, eccentric (*kikyô na*) drawing style seen in the stones, trees and figures is certainly that of Sansetsu. As Mr. Doi points out, this is clearly a work which Sansetsu painted in place of his teacher. Probably Sansetsu intended nothing more than to produce a folding screen that mimicked his teacher's painting style as closely as possible. Nevertheless, his own artistic sense, which was completely different from that of his teacher, did not permit him to do so.

Illustration 13. "Dragon and Tiger," Left Screen. Collection of Mr. Yoshimura.

Another clue is found in "Dragon and Tiger" (*Ryûkô-zu byôbu*) from the collection of Mr. Yoshimura Tokuhei (Illustration 13). Due to such characteristics as the

[5] Translator's note: See Chapter Four of the thesis accompanying this translation for further information on the legend of Zhang Liang as depicted by Iwasa Matabei.

bold inscription on this artwork, which is a bit different from those found on Sansetsu's other folding screens, as well as the painting style itself, in which the direct influence of his teacher Sanraku is quite strongly evident, this is thought to be a relatively early work in Sansetsu's career. In this painting, however, he reduces the feverish dynamism of Momoyama painting, and within the cool, static order, an inner consciousness that seems about to cause the imagery to coagulate has already unmistakably emerged. Sansetsu's sensibility clearly rejects the Momoyama style. On the contrary, the ***slimy***, fantastic form of the tiger allows us a glimpse of his own original expression.

Sansetsu's singular personality is even more apparent in the sliding door paintings at Tenkyûin temple.

Tenkyûin was established within Myôshinji temple in the 8th year of Kan'ei (1631) at the suggestion of the younger sister of Ikeda Terumasa (1564-1613), the lord of Himeji Castle. At that time, the sliding-door paintings that were displayed in the living quarters of the temple, particularly the polychromatic works on gilded doors in three rooms of the south wing were renowned as the last of the un-restored partition paintings *(shôhekiga)* paintings from the Momoyama era. The artisans chosen to produce new paintings were Sanraku and his family, yet Sanraku had already reached the venerable age of 73 years, and so it is thought that the actual person responsible for the production was Sansetsu.

Works that clearly reveal the importance of the Tenkyûin sliding-door paintings within the development of Momoyama-style partition paintings (*shôhekiga*) are the depictions of birds and flowers from the four seasons (*shiki kachôzu*) located in the southwest section of the temple.[6] Particularly impressive is the eccentric (*kikyô na*) branch of the white *prunus*, so reminiscent of an enormous bonzai, that is depicted in "Pheasant in a Plum Tree" (*Ume ni sanchô zu*) on the north side of this room (Plate 10). Here we have a silent competition between the vitality of the robustly growing tree and a monomaniacal force that seems intent upon enforcing a geometric order upon the tree. The latter force somehow seems likely to win the struggle, and for this reason, the old

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[6] This room is officially referred to as *Jôkan Ni no Ma* 上間二の間.

plum tree, as if spellbound, assumes an awkward posture and coagulates within the gilded space. Ivy with vivid, red leaves clings to the prunus' trunk, from which flowers bloom; such contradictory indications to the season are boldly ignored for the sake of decorative effect. Rather than the pulsation of the natural world, an artificial construction now commands the viewer's attention.

The Japanese apricot tree (Latin: *prunus mume*) painted on the west side (Plate 11) stretches out small branches that seem frozen and paralyzed from the snow covering them. When staring at the shape of this ash-brown tree trunk that has a strange three-dimensionality reminiscent of western-style paintings from the Edo period, one can sense a strange, reptilian feeling hidden within it. To the viewer's left, a brown cliff protrudes like the face of a sea goblin (*umi bôzu*).

Illustration 14. "Tiger amidst Bamboo," detail of the north side of the installation. Collection of Tenkyûin Temple.

The attention that Sansetsu, who enjoys artificial inventions, pays to formalism is also very apparent in "Tiger amidst Bamboo" (*Take ni tora zu*) (Illustration 14), a work in the central room. In particular, Mr. Minamoto Yoshihiro recently pointed out a shocking geometric trick hidden within a square section composed of three narrow sliding doors in the center portion of the north side.[7] The tip of the vertical rock, Mr. Minamoto explains, lies exactly along the diagonal of this square, and with the rocks to the right and left of it, it forms the vertex of a perfect isosceles triangle. Also, an extension of the left side of this triangle passes the deteriorating tip of the bamboo rising up on the right and connects to the upper right corner of the square. Furthermore, an extension of the right side of the triangle connects to the upper left corner of the square, from where some bamboo leaves are peeking out. In this way, motifs from nature are appropriated for the sake of nothing more than a geometric construction.

It is believed that, in this way, the production of partition paintings (*shôhekiga*) at Tenkyûin temple in the 8th year of the Kan'ei era (1631) came to be an important opportunity that wakened Sansetsu's own qualities. He must have keenly felt that the style of these works, which we should consider masterpieces among the Momoyama-style partition paintings of the Kanô school, was entirely different from the frank style of his teacher.

In his later work, Sansetsu abandoned the effort to faithfully convey his teacher's style. Depending upon the situation, as in his production of the ceiling painting at Sennyûji temple in the 4th year of the Shôhô era (1647), he still sometimes displayed such restraint, but otherwise, it is thought that he decided to emphasize his own qualities in the Momoyama style.

The most representative example is "Old Plum Tree" (*Rôbai-zu*) (Plate 12), one of the sliding-door paintings at Tacchû Tenshôin subtemple of Myôshinji temple complex (said to have been founded around the 3rd year of the Shôhô era [1646]). This

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[7] See Minamoto Yoshihiro. "Geometric Compositions of the Genna – Kan'ei Period" ["*Genna kan'ei ki ni okeru kikagaku teki kôzu keishiki*"], *Bijutsushi*, no. 50.

polychromatic, gilded (*kinji sôzai*) sliding-door panel was attributed to Sanraku, but thanks to Mr. Doi, it has been added to the list of Sansetsu's works.

Kohitsu Ryôchû (died 1736), author of *Biographies of Japanese Painters* (*Fusôga Jinden*; published in the 16th year of the Meiji era [1883]), offered an appraisal of Sansetsu's artworks that I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and in regards to "Old Plum Tree" at Tenshôin subtemple, his comments are truly accurate. You know that the same branch of white *prunus* found in the flower-and-bird paintings at Tenkyûin reappears in this painting fifteen years later, but the extreme transformation that it has undergone since then is startling, isn't it? The tree's ash-green trunk rises and falls, bends and convulses amidst the brilliance of the gilding just like an enormous, flightless dragon writhing and tossing about. The enormous tree of the Momoyama painting style has ultimately been transported to a bizarre fantasy world. Here the artist displays without reservation the maniacal quality that he inserted with restraint, so to speak, into the paintings at Tenkyûin.

"Hanshan and Shide" (*Kanzan Jittoku zu*; from the collection of Shinshô Gokurakuji Temple; Plate 9), in terms of grotesquerie, is comparable to "Old Plum Tree" at Tenshôin. In particular, the disgusting shape from the mouths of these laughing figures down to their chins has a connection with the bizarre boulders that often appears in such works as "Wang Xizhi's Poetry Party at Lanting" (*Rantei kyokusuien zu byôbu*; in the collection of Zuishin'in temple) and clearly displays his obsession (*henshû*) with particular abstract forms. The "Song Of Eternal Grief" handscroll[8] (*Chôgonka Zumaki*; Illustration 15) depicts a geographically unidentified landscape, and not surprisingly, it is a good example of Sansetsu's maniacally formalistic sensibility.

I may have overemphasized the somewhat abnormal, perverse (*byô-teki na*) aspect of Sansetsu's artworks, tying together the imagery in those works and the tragedy of his imprisonment late in his life. Basically, Sansetsu was an artist who could bring a classical stillness and elegance to his paintings.

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[8] Translator's note: This image is based upon the Chinese poem "Changhenge" written by Bô Juyi (772-846).

It is thought that the artist's discerning sensibility made him unusually gifted at expressing the mood of such subjects as moonlight, evening, and a snowy landscape, depictions diametrically opposed to something like the peace of spring sunshine. The work that expresses this quality most clearly is "Waterfowl by Snowy Shore" (*Settei suikin zu byôbu*; Plate 13).

Illustration 15. "Song Of Eternal Grief" Handscroll.

The vitality of this picture derives from the shockingly detailed rhythm of the waves, in which he applied silver paint upon a layer of *gofun*[9]. Despite the thoroughly craft-oriented characteristic of that painting technique, the artist succeeds in giving a definite reality to his mental image of a moonlit winter night on the beach. The gulls are arranged in a row, and the calculated rhythm of that line creates a lively sense of movement rarely found in Sansetsu's work. Furthermore, the methodical and artificial construction of the pines and clusters of boulders, so typical of the artist, do not seem so unnatural. Here, a precise, rational compositional structure, particular to his paintings from the Kan'ei era (1624-44), his unique individuality, and the traditions of decorative yamato-e painting combine to form a splendid trinity. It would not be incorrect to say that, in this kind of refined, rational decorative sensibility, we find an element that runs through the works of a later artist, Ogata Kôrin (1658-1716).

[9] Translator's note: *Gofun* is a painting material composed of ground oyster shells.

I am more interested, however, in "Old Plum Tree" at Tenshôin temple than I am in "Waterfowl by Snowy Shore." This is because I believe that the convulsions of these grotesque, enormous trees do not only symbolically express the death throes of the spirit of the Momoyama era but also herald the "Kyoto school of eccentricity," composed of Jakuchû, Shôhaku and Rosetsu, that appears more than a century later. In contrast to Tawaraya Sôtatsu's emphasis upon tremendously bright romanticism, the Kan'ei era (1624-44), in which the obsessive personalities (*henshû*) and eccentricity (*kisô*) of Iwasa Matabei and Sansetsu ran rampant, seems to be a time period more complicated than a single historical narrative can express.

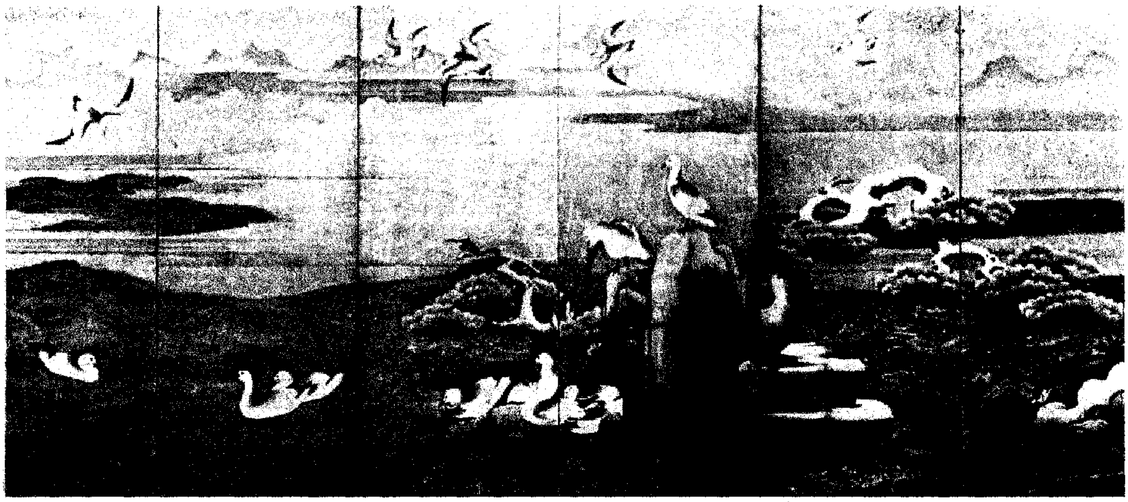
Chapter Two
Convulsions of the Enormous Momoyama Tree:
Kanô Sansetsu
Plates

9. "Hanshan and Shide," detail, Shinshô Gokurakuji temple.

10. "Pheasant in a Plum Tree," Tenkyûin temple.

11. "Plum Tree in Snow (*Prunus Mume*)," Tenkyûin temple.

12. “Old Plum Tree,” Tenshôin temple.



13. “Waterfowl by Snowy Shore,” detail, right screen. Collection of Mr. Kawamoto.

Chapter Three
The Natural History of Fantasia: Itô Jakuchû

> *Strange condensations that are strictly molded into the forms of chickens create forms that seem to churn in one's heart. Amidst the amorphous cacti, they bite at one another, shake and flow onward. Jakuchû does not enslave the cacti; he lets the cacti decide their own shapeless shapes and, one on top of another, he piles these liberated forms that freely express their inner selves. They seem to create an eternally expanding world.*
>
> Sugimata Tadashi

This opening quote is a passage from an article by Sugimata Tadashi (1914-1994) that appeared in *Bijutsu Techo* magazine more than ten years ago (March 1957). It was a short remark about Jakuchû's "Cacti and Fowl" (*Saboten Gunkei-zu*; in the collection of Saifukuji temple) which was being shown in the *Exhibition of Famous Chicken Paintings* (*Keiga Meisakuten*) that opened in the Year of the Chicken (1957), and it impressed me in a strong and lasting way as perhaps the first critique to grasp the nature of Jakuchû's paintings with the eyes of an avant-garde artist.[1] However, in terms of specialized research about this curious painter, almost no progress has been made since the achievements of Mr. Akiyama Mitsuo at the end of the Taishô era. Though it is rather too late, in this chapter, I need to resume this research.

Regarding Jakuchu's biography, the first clue we find is the inscription by Zen priest Daiten that is carved into the side and rear of Jakuchû's tombstone in the graveyard of Shôkokuji temple. In the third year of the Meiwa era (1766), at the age of 51, having neither a wife nor a child, and with not even his youngest brother left alive, he made up his mind to erect his own tombstone while he was still alive, and he asked his close friend Daiten to write the inscription. Valuable proof about Jakuchû's birth, personality and manner of working is included there. I believe that a far better stone than usual was used,

[1] Translator's note: All English titles for works discussed in this chapter are consistent with those used in either Money Hickman's *The Paintings of Jakuchû* or Kyoto National Museum's *Jakuchû: tokubetsu tenrankai botsugo 200-nen: bunkazai hogohô 50-nen kinen jigyô=Jakuchû!*

for now, two hundred years later, this inscription is still clearly legible, but the entirety is also printed in Daiten's collection of poetry *Shôun Seikô* (小雲棲稿). There are a few other documents, but it is unfortunate that letters or diaries, which would be direct proof of his words and deeds, are totally unknown.

Itô Jakuchû was born on *Nishiki kosuji* street in Kyoto in the first year of the Kyôhô era (1716). Some of the remains of Nishiki kosuji street still remain today, but at that time, as a market selling fish and vegetables, it was packed with people every morning. Jakuchû, as the eldest brother in his family, was in charge of the family business, a greengrocery called *Masuya*. However, for some reason, this person showed no interest at all in commerce or making money, but not because he had taken to a life of debauchery. He was more or less uninterested in the various pleasures of the floating world such as artistic accomplishments. Furthermore, he was deeply devoted to Buddhism. In pursuit of spiritual development, he shaved his head, he abstained from eating meat, and he even decided to remained celibate. Also, he saw some people catching sparrows and selling them, and he felt so sorry for the birds, he bought several dozen and released them in his garden. From his childhood, he was interested in living in seclusion. For two years, he disappeared deep into the mountains of Tanba, and rumors of his death from illness spread. He detested academics since he was a young boy, and since he was not adept in reading and writing. He was no more than an odd person with no particular merits other than his religious devotion. However, there was one thing through which this person could forget everything else and immerse himself: painting. I don't exactly know when Jakuchû became aware of this "vocation," but in his thirties, he suddenly left the family business to his younger brother. He constructed a studio – a remote, quiet place on Nishiki kosuji street that he called "the nest of solitary pleasure"(*dokuraku-ka*) – and there he began a new life basking in the *samâdhi* of artistic production. From this point onward, he continued this spiritual development through painting for more than half a century until he died.

As the child of a wealthy merchant family who later devoted himself to painting, Jakuchû's biography has strong similarities to that of Ogata Kôrin, who died the same

year that Jakuchû was born. However, since Kôrin ultimately turned to a life of painting after squandering his family's fortune on debauchery, he needed to court the patronage of the imperial family and other famous people. In contrast to the sorrow which Kôrin's worries about social relations caused him throughout his life, Jakuchû inherited the produce shop from his parents, and with the blessed ability to sustain his livelihood merely through the interest from this business, he was free from worldly constraints and could continue making whatever he wanted. These financial circumstances enabled him to even donate all thirty scrolls of the *Colorful Realm of Living Beings* (*Dôshoku Sai-e*) series that I will later discuss to Shôkokuji temple.

The repertoire of works that run throughout Jakuchû's long period of artistic production include Buddhist paintings and portraits, but it is mainly limited to *dôshoku butsuga* (paintings of animals and plants). Among these, his chickens are particularly famous, and in the inscription on Jakuchû's tomb, Daiten wrote the following explanation of how Jakuchû came to exclusively paint animals and plants, particularly chickens. He says that, at first, Jakuchû, like all people interested in becoming painters at the time, studied under an artist from the Kanô school. However, one day, he realized that, no matter how much he internalized the techniques of the Kanô school, ultimately, he would not be able to transcend the Kanô school model. Such a training would be inferior to studying Chinese paintings from the Song and Yuan dynasties. Accordingly, he copied innumerable Song and Yuan paintings, but yet again, he realized that these Song and Yuan painters had painted "things," and he was merely *repainting* the painted images of those things; he had never painted "things" directly. But if he were to do so, what "things" should he choose? Flying creatures like a *kirin* (Chinese phoenix), or Chinese legendary figures and landscapes – one can only find such things existing within other works of art. Accordingly, how about animals and plants? Peacocks and parrots are not constantly available to look at, but nothing can be more intimately studied than chickens, which have colorful feathers.

At this point, he decided to raise dozens of chickens under his window, and for several years, he continued to sketch their appearance. He then expanded his observation

to include flowers, insects, fish, and similar creatures. As one might expect, he wondered whether or not this process was the most orderly and rational, but anyways, Jakuchû's realization about the significance in making paintings from direct observation of "things" can also be inferred from another source in which Daiten quotes Jakuchû as saying, "all of the so-called paintings of these days are just copies of other artworks; I have never seen a painting of a "thing." His practice of raising and observing chickens at his home was probably true as well.

Needless to say, Maruyama Ôkyô was the one who despised the idea of copying classical artworks for the sake of posterity and who, feeling that the most important goal of painting was the depiction of actual things, advocated so-called artistic naturalism. However, in words, Jakuchû's painting philosophy as well was no different than that of Ôkyô's. Nevertheless, Jakuchû was seventeen years older than Ôkyô. This seems to mean that Jakuchû preceded Ôkyô as a painter who advocated artistic naturalism. However, when looking at actual works of art, it is believed that there was a rather essential gap between the "thing" in Jakuchû's mind and the "thing" that Ôkyô advocated. Let us consider *Dôshoku Sai-e*, the artwork representative of Jakuchû's naturalism.

In the 22nd year of the Meiji era (1889), the thirty scrolls of *Dôshoku Sai-e* were dedicated by Shôkokuji temple to the Imperial family as compensation for financial assistance, and presently, it is in the custody of the Imperial Household Agency. How much time he spent on this ambitious work is not precisely known, but in the 8th year of the Hôreki era (1758), at which time he was forty-three years old, or slightly before that time, he began with the aspiration of completing thirty scrolls; in the 11th year of the Hôreki era (1761), twelve scrolls had been completed; and in the 2nd year of the Meiwa era (1765), three scrolls of Shaka (Shakyamuni), Monju Bosatsu (Sanskrit: Bodhisattva Manjusri), and Fugen Bosatsu (Sanskrit: Bodhisattva Samantabhadra) were added to twenty-four scrolls and donated to Shôkokuji temple. Then, according to the inscription (on Jakuchû's grave) by Daiten, in November of the 3rd year of the Meiwa era (1766), at which point Jakuchû was 51 years old, all thirty of the scrolls were donated to

Shôkokuji temple. In other words, he spent the entirety of his forties producing this series.

Like the name *Sai-e* implies,[2] these are vividly chromatic works painted in a shockingly detailed manner on silk. The theme of the series deals with birds, such as peacocks, mandarin ducks, parrots, cranes, and of course chickens; as well as trees and flowers of the four seasons, including plum trees, pine trees, sunflowers, cotton roses, peonies, heavenly bamboo (*nandin*, or *nandina domestica*), and hydrangeas. They are mainly bird-and-flower paintings or flower-and-grass paintings that are classified as Chinese paintings. In addition, creatures from various fish and shellfish, insects to worms appear. In terms of thematic painting categories, these images fit into the traditional repertoire of Chinese paintings as kelp-and-fish pictures, images of shellfish, and grass-and-insect pictures, but in the broad sense of the word, they can also be categorized as being related to bird-and-flower paintings. Just as Daiten described, Jakuchû greedily learned his painting style from the bird-and-flower paintings of the Song, Yuan, and Ming paintings – particularly Ming paintings – possessed by Shôkokuji and all the other temples in Kyoto, and the results are obvious. However, when Jakuchû, who was knowledgeable about Chinese paintings in this way, once again distanced himself from models and began an original conversation with "things," a unique vision of the world that can only be described as entirely his was born.

Let us take "Insects and Reptiles at a Pond" (*Chihen Gunchû-zu*) (Plate 15) and "Shellfish" (*Kaikô-zu*; Plate 14) as examples. The former painting presents all kinds of lesser animals and insects – ranging from frogs, tadpoles, snakes, spiders, and lizards to centipedes, house centipedes, oriental mole crickets (*gryllotalpa fossor*), and pillbugs (*oniscedea*) – at a lakeside in the middle of summer. The latter painting could described as an illustrated manual of varieties of shellfish thrown up upon the seashore. This kind of interest in categorizing animals and plants can be thought of as reflecting the vigorous desire for knowledge about natural history at that time, as represented by the popularity of botany. In Ôkyô's sketchbook, there are clearly precise depictions of an even wider

[2] Translator's note: *Sai*= color; *e*= picture.

variety of insects and shellfish. However, there is a truly strange mixture of humor and grotesquerie in the "insect paradise" painted in "Insects and Reptiles at a Pond" as opposed to Ôkyô's effort to produce precise copies of their shapes by means of a methodical manner, which reminds viewers of an illustrator of picture books about animals and plants. In addition, it is impossible to think that other artists of the time, including Ôkyô, possessed the sensitivity needed to grasp the fantastic beauty in the shapes and colors of shells found in "Shellfish." In particular, I'd like to draw the reader's attention to the way in which the tip of a wave creeping up onto the beach in "Shellfish" seems to be an organism like a tentacle of a mollusk or an amoeba. This shocking image that seems to be associated with surrealist works of art is a part of Jakuchû's originality.

This kind of internal vision runs throughout his depictions of chickens which comprise seven of the thirty scrolls of *Dôshoku Sai-e*. According to Daiten's inscription on Jakuchû's gravestone, Jakuchû raised this foreign variety of ornamental chickens and gamebirds, which flaunt the gorgeous beauty of their multicolored wings, and the artist persistently observed and painted them, but in the opinion of ornithologists who specialize in chickens, the overall proportions of the chickens in Jakuchû's paintings as well as the shape and placement of their organs are imprecise compared to those in Ôkyô's paintings. As examples of life painting, they say, it is difficult to find positive qualities in Jakuchû's chicken paintings. However, is Jakuchû's "thing" based upon that kind of exact reproduction of his subject's external appearance? For example, in "A Group of Roosters" (*Gunkei-zu*; Illustration 16), which according to a critique by Yamashita Kiyoshi is famous as a reproduction, the fantastic orchestration of feather patterns transformed into an abstract design and the repeated form of the comb, so reminiscent of a shooting star, indicates the artist's intention. Like a chicken painted by Picasso, the grotesque beauty of the gamecock in "Black Rooster and Nandin" (*Nanten Yûkei-zu*; Illustration 17), with its deformed, fierce legs and beak, speaks of the intensity of Jakuchû's inner vision. Wasn't his life painting, based upon the "thing" that he mentions,

no more than the means by which that kind of peculiar internal vision is ultimately triggered? The author of *Gajô Yoryaku* refers to this vision when he says about Jakuchû's life painting, "it respects *shai*[3] without striving for mimesis."

All of the scrolls of *Dôshoku Sai-e* possess a common characteristic regarding their pictorial space. It is a space that we can say is placed in a kind of state of weightless diffusion. The various forms of animals, plants and rocks that are reduced to a combination of wavy curves float and wriggle within that space in which there is no room to visually seize them. Among such works is "Fish in a Lotus Pond" (*Renchi Yûden*; Plate 16) in which the lotuses evoke mental associations with science-fiction subjects such as a city at the bottom of the sea or a plant on Mars. Another example is "White Phoenix and Pine" (*Rôshô Hakuô-zu*; Plate 17), in which there are images that even elicit psychedelic hallucinations, like the phoenix's madly dancing, heart-shaped mark of peach-colored feathers.

"Eyes" that secretly gazes at us and vacant "peepholes" that invite us to look through them are also cleverly hidden within the pictorial space of the *Dôshoku Sai-e* series. I do not mean to only include the eyes of living organisms like those of the chickens in "A Group of Roosters." I am referring to the innumerable white flowers (Cherokee roses [*Rosa Laevigata Michx*]) set into a kind of dizzying carpet of roses in "Wagtail and Roses" (*Bara Kodori-zu*; Plate 18), as well as to the strange, small holes opened by the knots in the stalk of the palm tree in "Roosters and Hemp Palms" (*Shuro yûkei-zu*; Plate 19), to the hollowed-out holes in the fantastic designs that the newly-melting mottle of snow creates in "Golden Pheasants in Snow" (*Secchû Kenkei-zu*; Illustration 18), as well as to the spots, holes, and bugbites in the leaves of "Rooster, Sunflowers and Morning Glories" (*Himawari yûkei-zu*) and of "Rose Mallows and Fowl" (*Fuyô sôkei-zu*). Even with the aid of depth psychology, the riddle of these mysterious "peepholes" is not easily solved.

[3] Translator's note: *shai* = expressionism, an antonym to the life painting practiced in China.

Illustration 16. "A Group of Roosters" (from the series *Doshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial Household Collection.)

Illustration 17. "Black Rooster and Nandin" (from the series *Doshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial Household Collection.)

Illustration 18. "Golden Pheasants in Snow" (from the series Doshoku Sai-e in the Imperial Household Collection.)

The workmanship of *Dôshoku Sai-e*, which was donated to Shôkokuji temple, developed a reputation among residents of Kyoto. In the fifth year of the Meiwa era (1768), Jakuchû heard rumors to this effect and asked for a leave of absence from Shôkokuji temple, saying that he deeply yearned to see the remains of the gate of Higashi Honganji temple. When he left, he temporarily removed these paintings from the temple's collection and brought them with him. As a result, Jakuchu's name can be found in the

Records of Figures in Kyoto (*Heian jinbutsu-shi*) published that year between the names of Maruyama Ôkyô and Ike Taiga. With this record, there is no doubt that his fame developed extremely fast. However, according to this record, the role of a landowner didn't fit Jakuchû's nature. At this time, having accomplished his dream of donating thirty paintings to the temple, he had already prepared his own tomb, and in exchange for making arrangements to transfer his home and estate over to the city after he died, the town agreed to celebrate the anniversary of his death every year by offering money and gifts to the temple. At last, with no worries about his death, he became absorbed in his favorite activity of painting.

In that way, he lived for many years, painting everyday from morning until night, and one day, he encountered great misfortune. In the eighth year of the Tenmei era (1788), at which time Jakuchû was seventy-three years old, Kyoto was struck by a fire of unprecedented size, and the central area of the city was burnt to the ground.
The grounds of Shôkokuji were also burnt, and only the *hattô* (structure similar to a lecture hall) remained standing. The *Dôshoku Sai-e* series was miraculously saved, but his studio there, the one near *Nishiki kosuji* street, and one more on the edge of the Kamo river burned up, and it seems that a large number of works burned up at that time. It should not surprise one to know that Jakuchû was apparently wounded in the disaster, and the following year, he contracted a serious illness. Furthermore, in the following year, the third year of the Kansei era, "due to extreme hardship," the city government said that they wanted to cancel the previous contract in which Jakuchû agreed to transfer his home and estate to the city after his death.

However, during the time period that should be called the great misfortune of his life (the second year of the Kansei era), Jakuchû painted one more representative work, the "Cacti and Fowl (*Saboten Gunkei-zu*)" at Saifukuji temple (Plate 20).

Saifukuji is a temple in Toyonaka City, Osaka Prefecture that is associated with the Nishi Honganji school of Pure Land Buddhism. It is believed that the way in which Jakuchû, who was left homeless by the fire, came to stay here and paint the sliding-doors was through the intercession of the parishioner Yoshino Kansei V, who Jakuchû and his

father had met earlier. Kansei was the present head of a wealthy merchant family that for generations ran the Rakudane Monya store in Osaka. He was a curious person of taste who enjoyed such activities as playing a flute while riding on a camel's back. He also had commercial relationships, and at his home, it is said, he collected such foreign, rare animals and plants as cacti.

"Cacti and Fowl" is painted on six gilded sliding-door panels that separate the section of the main temple hall where idols are enshrined. The dazzling surface of gold leaf that, perhaps due to the financial power of the Yoshino family, is of an unusually high quality for this time period, no longer allows the repetition of detailed, complicated forms that can be found in the *Dôshoku Sai-e* series. The background is entirely omitted, and the motifs are strictly limited to the chickens at which Jakuchû was so skilled in depicting and the cacti from Mr. Yoshino's curious collection. The painting is flavored with the atmosphere of daily life, with the lovely forms of chicks found between cocks and hens that have emerged from the *Dôshoku Sai-e* series. However, in accordance with Jakuchû's unique vision, the forms of these birds are subdivided into circles, ovals, and triangles. They get restructured and "condense" in this golden space. They are tempted by the fluid forms of the cacti, which suddenly begin to churn in a violent and dazzling way like primitive people. As a medium, the gold leaf creates intense color effects like a daydream: the garish green of the cacti at both ends of the painting, the fantastic blue forms (the one on the right side looks like a rock, but what might the one on the left, which resembles a shark's tail or like an enormous piece of kelp, possibly be? Perhaps it is a succulent), the tosca red of the chicken, and the exquisite black, white, yellow, brown, and peach-colored arabesque in its wings… Even without listing these descriptions that leave me tongue-tied, Mr. Sugimata's description quoted at the beginning of this chapter is sufficient, but what I would like to simply add is that, at this time, Jakuchû took a progressive approach to the tradition of highly chromatic bird-and-flower paintings on gold leaf that his predecessors Sanraku, Sansetsu and Kôrin developed. Placing these ideas, including Kôrin's "life-painting" style of bird-and-flower paintings, into the melting-pot of his intense individuality, he recast them as a new kind of beauty. By

means of this one artwork, Jakuchû attained an original approach to the tradition of decorative painting.

In addition to these kinds of chromatic paintings, Jakuchû even displayed his originality in the field of ink painting.

The sliding-door paintings in the library (*shoin*) of Kinkakuji Temple, painted in the ninth year of the Hôreki era (1759, at which time he was 44 years old), are representative works among his ink paintings. Grape vines, pine trees, cranes, chickens, Japanese banana trees (Latin: *musa*), and bamboo are painted throughout five rooms in a superb style to which sophisticated humor and sarcasm have been added, exemplified by the crane whose beak in which teeth have grown makes it look like a dinosaur (Plate 21) and the bamboo grove that looks like a bunch of skewered dumplings. It is an artwork that we must not overlook, exhibiting a new element, precisely equivalent to the painting style of painters of *ikkaku*[4] in the Ming and Qing dynasties. On the reverse side of the previously discussed *Cacti and Fowl* at Saifukuji temple is an exemplary, awkward painting in black ink depicting lotuses that seem to have originated in a science-fiction story (Illustration 19; presently converted into hanging scrolls). This is also one of his masterpieces of ink painting. Other than this, there are still extant a large number of Jakuchû's ink paintings created in his final years after the disaster of the Tenmei era. All of them are quite unlike his carefully detailed polychromatic paintings. He creates the effect of ink seeping out from inside the soft paper, and his simplified use of brushstrokes connects these works to the *zenga* paintings of Hakuin Ekaku. The interesting shapes in "Crane" (*tsuru-zu*; private collection, United States, Illustration 20), are witty, and in "Vegetable Parinirvana" (*Yasai nehan-zu*; in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum, Plate 22) or "The Two Transcendents Lui Haichan and Li Tieguai" (*Gama Tekkai-zu*; Collection of Mr. Takahashi; Illustration 21), Jakuchû deals with the subjects in a manner reminiscent of comic books. In response to a flood of requests for his work, Jakuchû painted these kinds of improvisational ink paintings, and for each one, he always

[4] Translator's note: *Ikkaku* (Ch: *yige*) is synonymous with *ippin* (Ch: *yipin*). See Chapter Two of the thesis accompanying this translation for further information on *yipin*.

requested payment of one *to* (approximately 18 liters) of rice. His artist name (*go*) of Tobeian ("one-*to*-of-rice hermitage") or Beito-ô ("one-*to*-of-rice old-man") originated from this custom. He did not put on airs, and at this time, the elderly Jakuchû's true face as a natural humorist clearly shows.

Jakuchû's unassertive eagerness to produce artwork was not limited to the field of painting. According to Mr. Doi Tsugiyoshi's estimate, from the middle of the An'ei era (1772-81) through the beginning of the Tenmei era (1781-89), a period when he was in his sixties, Jakuchû drew the sketches and supervised the carving of a group of stone sculptures left on the mountain behind Shakubuji Temple in Fukagasa district (Plate 23). If one were to pass through the temple's Chinese-style gate, whose red color and use of plaster is particular to architecture of the Ôbaku sect, and follow a narrow mountain road, between the bushes on either side of the road, like Buddhas performing austerities in the wilderness, the weathered and vague stone sculptures appear one after another and offer

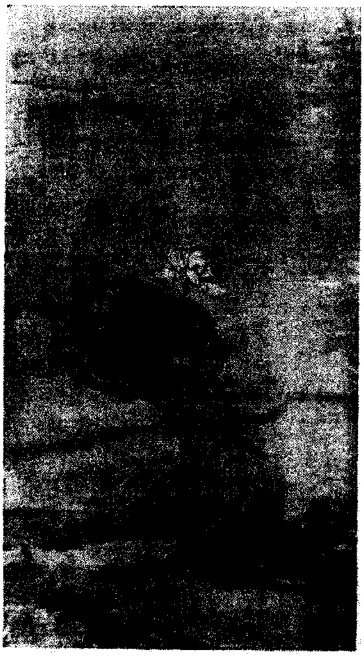


Illustration 19. "Lotus in a Lake." Collection of Saifukuji Temple.

Illustration 20. "Crane." Private collection, United States

Illustration 21. "The Two Transcendents Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai." Collection of Mr. Takahashi.

strange greetings. These incomparable works, commonly called "The 500 Arhats" (*Gohyaku Rakan*), actuality represent in stone the entire life of Shakyamuni from his birth to his *parinirvana*. Their superficial treatment and terribly simplistic, naïve shapes bring to mind stone figures from the Kofun and Asuka eras or wooden *kokeshi* dolls more than sculptures of the Buddha. Still clearly carved into the individuality of their ragged shapes and facial expressions is Jakuchû's unending eccentricity (奇想 *kisô*), humor, and, to borrow a critique from one of his contemporaries, his spirit of curiosity.

Speaking of stone, it is unfortunate that I don't know the location anymore, but "Stone Lanterns" (*Sekitôrô-zu*; Illustration 22) was the subject of an illustrated book published before the war. The various shapes of the lanterns, which are painted in a unique, pointilistic style as if they were a mirage, possess an unpleasantness like a group of goblins and, at the same time, a friendly presence as if they wanted to say something. Be they the stone sculptures at Shakubu-ji Temple or these charming goblin lanterns, these works offer a taste of Jakuchû's animistic sensibility.

After the great fire of the Tenmei era, Jakuchû moved his residence to a location in front of the gate of Sakubuji Temple and lived here for the remainder of his life with

Illustration 22. "Stone Lanterns."

Illustration 23. "Ornamental Flowers." Ceiling painting, Collection of Shingyôji Temple.

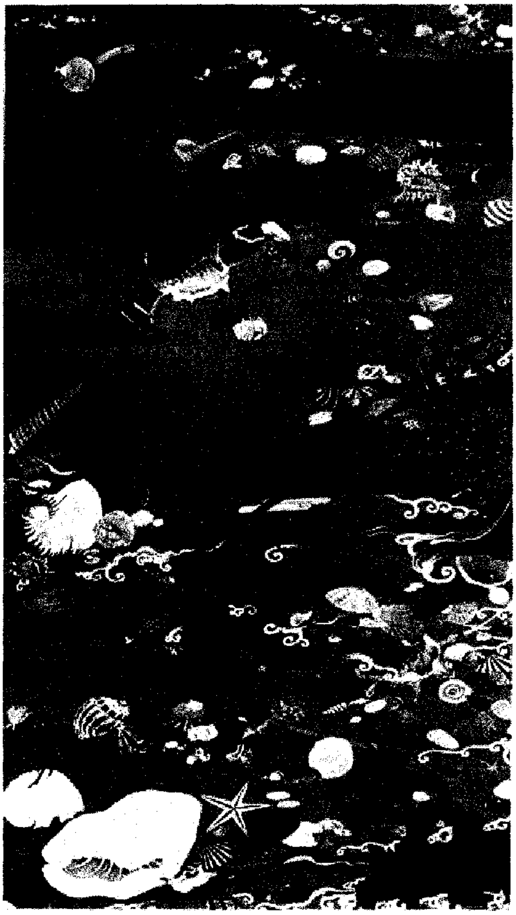
his widowed, younger sister. He passed away in September of the twelfth year of the Kansei era (1800) at the age of eighty-five.

"Ornamental Flowers" (*Saishiki kaki-zu*; Illustration 23), a painting on the ceiling of Shakubuji temple's Kannon hall, speaks of Jakuchû's ability to maintain his passion about art and a fresh sense until the verge of his death. Due to the decay of the temple, through the intervention of people in the Meiji era, presently it is located at Shingyô-ji Temple near Higashiyama Niômon gate. The fact that these paintings are signed "Beito-ô, age eighty-eight" confuse the verdict about when he actually died. The truth is that, at the age of eighty-four, in order to avoid the ominous number four, in order to fit with his artist name "Beito-ô," he fudged his age, and this apparently relieved him, but at any rate, there is no argument that this is the last masterpiece that he produced in his life. Jakuchû installed circles, his favorite shape, in each of the one hundred sixty-seven square frames of the lattice ceiling. He created endless variations to a witty rhythm based around the theme of circles and ovals, and images of variously shaped flowers, such as peonies, chrysanthemums, cockscombs, and hydrangeas, were composed to fit each circular format. One can discover here his state of mind in the final year of his life; it seems as if

he was washing away the glaring obstinacy of maturity and wondering if he had yet become the "spirit" of this picture.

It may be an eccentric way of thinking, but when looking at this ceiling painting, "Ornamental Flowers," and such naïve paintings so reminiscent of children's art as "*Fushimi* Doll" (*Fushimi Ningyô-zu*), which is also thought to be a late work, I came to think that, if we were to remove some variations in Jakuchû's style as well as his expressionistic tendencies, we would probably be left with a naïve artist quite similar to Henri Rousseau. Then we could add other artists to this lineage of masters of primitivism. Wouldn't this be an unexpectedly useful way in which to discover the essence of this group of artists?

Chapter Three
The Natural History of Fantasia: Itô Jakuchû
Plates



14. "Shellfish" (From *Dôshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial House Collection)

15. "Insects and Reptiles at a Pond" (From *Dôshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial House Collection)

16. "Fish in a Lotus Pond" (From *Dôshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial House Collection)

17. "White Phoenix and Pine" (From *Dôshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial House Collection)

18. "Wagtail and Roses" (From *Dôshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial House Collection)

19. "Roosters and Hemp Palms" (From *Dôshoku Sai-e* in the Imperial House Collection)

20. "Cacti and Fowl," Saifukuji Temple

21. "Cranes," Kinkakuji Temple

22. "Vegetable Parinirvana," Kyoto National Museum.

23. "500 Arhats," detail, Shakubuji Temple.

Chapter Four
Demented, Outcast Immortals: Soga Shôhaku

> *He was from the province of Ise and traveled between the capitol and Settsu Province (Osaka-Hyogo area). He appeared to be an ordinary, demented person of this world. His painting style changed freely according to his state of mind. He has works like his flower paintings in which he seems to have applied ink to pieces of straw and shuffled them around (on the paper). In addition, when he paints very precisely, his work is unlike that of any other artist.*
>
> From *History of Deviant Artists in the Early Modern Period* (*Kinsei itsujin gashi*)

In my profession dealing with Japanese and Chinese classical paintings, I have had more than a few opportunities to see various strange things. However, I recently beheld an old work that was unimaginably intense. It was Soga Shôhaku's "Immortals" (*Gunsen-zu byôbu*),[1] shown in the plates here (Plates 24-25).

By means of the *Liexian quanzhuan* (Japanese: *Ressen zenden*; *Complete Collection of Biographies of the Immortals*), compiled in the Ming Dynasty, we can determine to some extent the identities of the strange characters appearing in this work, a pair of six-panel folding screens. However, I have absolutely no idea what Shôhaku used as a source in painting this folding screen. From the fact that *Wan xiao tang hua zhuan*, a book of figure illustrations produced by a painter in the Qing Dynasty named Shangguan zhou (b. 1665), closely resembles this screen in terms of the artist's style and the figures' clothing, it is possible that Shôhaku saw and used as a source an illustration book of the same origin that was imported to Japan around that time.[2] However, one could not go to the more or less extreme extent of saying that "Immortals" was a faithful copy of such a source. In particular, we ought to call the eccentricity of his depiction a quality that is unprecedented and probably unrepeatable among the old and new works dealing with this

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[1] Translator's note: All English titles for works discussed in this chapter are consistent with those used in Kyoto National Museum's *Burai to iu yuetsu: tokubetsu tenrankai (Shôhaku Show).*

[2] Translator's note: See Chapter Two of the thesis accompanying this translation for a discussion of Shangguan's influence upon this painting.

kind of painting theme. The facial expression of Xiwangmu (Japanese: Seiôbo; Queen Mother of the West),[3] who looks out cross-eyed through a gauze fan (on the left end of the left screen) appears more idiotic than the final period of *ukiyo-e* beauties. The small animal that is trying to steal the peach in her hand must be Dongfang Shuo (Japanese: Tôbôsaku). We can call him a child that is a cross between a human and a *pangolin* (a scaly anteater). He is an extremely strange character. Another extremely vulgar depiction is that of Liu Haichan (Japanese: Gama Sennin), who resembles a hobgoblin, with his pale and swollen belly like that of a waterlogged corpse. Here, he is having a beauty clean out his ears. To the right of him, the old man with the white beard who is wearing a robe made of a rope-like material is Zuoci (Japanese: Saji). It seems that he is using magic to draw fish out of a shallow container of water. If you look closely at this container, you will notice that it is decorated with a monster's face. Next, the style with which the artist metamorphoses Hâritî (Japanese: Kishi Mojin) into a bearded man does not exudes good feelings, and the pink faces of the demon children could not be called cute even as flattery. On the left side of the right screen, above the troubled waters, a dragon seems about to capitulate to the blue-robed Lu Dongbin (Japanese: Ryodôhin), and the dragon's face seems to be going wild like stalagmites in a limestone cavern. The depiction of this unique wave seems to foretell of Hokusai's print "Wave off the Coast of Kanagawa." A figure who may be Li Tieguai (Japanese: Tekkai) faces this wave and calls out with both arms raised, and the way in which his robe is shown to be flapping in the wind is truly surreal. The grotesque feel of his palms and toes ultimately makes Shôhaku seem like an Edo version of Matthias Grunewald. To his right, playing a flute to the phoenix near him is the Han emperor whose red face, like that of a player in a classical Chinese opera wearing traditional makeup, distinguishes him from ordinary humans. On the far right is this leader fellow, perhaps Mayizi (Japanese: Maiko). He wears a robe like a *kusari katabira* (a ninja outfit) that appears to be made of hemp, and

[3] Translator's note: See Chapter Four of the thesis accompanying this translation for an alternative interpretation of the figures in this painting.

both his hair and beard are disheveled. He shades his eyes with his small hand and squints. Perhaps this is meant to be Shôhaku's self-portrait.

What further emphasizes the unique expressionism in this kind of depiction is the personality of the colors. Since this is a work of Shôhaku, who is particularly adept at ink painting, rather calling this a polychromatic work, it would be more correct to say that this is basically an ink painting in which color is applied to such places as the characters' clothes. However, this spotty use of color produces truly fierce disharmony between the glaring reds, yellows, blues, and earth tones. What is particularly impressive is the yellow crane and the yellow applied to the clothes of the woman cleaning Liu Haichan's ears. It has a grotesque vividness reminiscent of florescent paint that stimulates the viewer's nerves. One cannot find a similar example of this kind of painting at that time; as we might have expected, we should probably consider it to be the product of Shôhaku's peculiar exhibitionistic urge. This impression is particularly strong in the gaudy red on Liu Haichan's lips.

On the outer edges of the pair of folding screens, the following signatures are written:

> (Right side)
> *Painted by Soga Teruo, 35 years old at the time of his death*
> *Shôhaku Sakonjirô, a tenth generation descendent of Jasoku Ken*
> *Terumasa Asomi, Captain of the Soga Hyôgo clan*
> *Subordinate rank of the lower fourth class*
> (Signed with a hand-painted seal [top] and an impressed seal [bottom])[4]
>
> (Left side)
> *Painted by Soga Sakonjirô Shôhaku Teruo,*
> *a.k.a. Shikibu Taisuke Jasoku Ken Kikaku Nyûdô the Tenth*
> (Signed with an impressed seal [top] and a hand-painted seal [bottom])[5]

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[4]従四位下曽我兵庫頭暉祐朝臣
十世孫蛇足軒蕭白左近次郎
曽我暉雄行年三十五歳筆
花押　　　印
[5]式部太輔蛇足軒暉珏入道十世
曽我左近次郎蕭白暉雄筆
印　　　　花押

Here, Shôhaku puts on airs to a terrible extreme by boldly writing that he is the descendent of Soga Jasoku (died 1483; founder of the Soga school), and to say that he himself died at the age of 35 is an extremely sarcastic comment. A conspicuous aspect to these inscriptions is that the left one and the right one have bizarre seals with strange shapes. Needless to say, this is not the proper way to paint a hand-painted seal. We ought to call the exaggerated form of the seal a first-class prank by Shôhaku. We can find this kind of "hand-painted seal" on other works by Shôhaku, but *all of the shapes are different*. Shôhaku's attitude towards authority and convention, like peeking at another person's private parts, shows through in this instance.

Even those people who are authorities of classical art know little about Soga Shôhaku. Such publications as a survey of his work published after the war treat him as one of Edo's second-rate artists; he is a character who was brushed over in at the most one or two lines of text. However, recently his particular expressionistic style has suddenly come to receive international attention. Presently, art historians have hurriedly set out upon the discovery of his buried biography and the examination of his works.

The materials about Shôhaku's biography are, at the present moment, extremely scarce. In a way similar to Jakuchû, neither diaries nor letters of his can be found. The only bit of evidence we have is the grave of his only son, an infant at the time of his death in the sixth year of the An'ei era (1777). On the almost entirely destroyed gravestone that has been recently recognized at Kôshôji temple in Kyoto, Shôhaku had his own name inscribed beside that of his son, and above these he inscribed the names of the people thought to be his own parents (Illustration 24). Next to this grave, the grave of his younger sister has been found, and together with the registry at the same temple, this has only yielded a bit of information about his place of birth, relatives, and the year he died.

It is believed that Shôhaku was born into a Kyoto merchant family with the store name of Tanbaya or Tangoya, and it seems that his actual name was Miura. The year that he died was the first year of the Tenmyô era (1781), four years after his infant son's death.

There are no precise records regarding how old he was when he died, but the only clue is the following memo written by the Meiji painter Momosawa Josui (1873-1906), who I shall discuss later. He says that one of Shôhaku's paintings of *rakan* (arhats), a *haritsuke-ga* (a painting later affixed to a panel), is located at a temple known as Jôkôji and located in the suburbs of Tsu City, and upon it can be found the inscription, "Painted by Soga in ninth year of the Hôreki era (1759) at the age of 30." Since this painting is no longer extant, we cannot ascertain the truth of this statement, but according to this, he was born in the fifteenth year of the Kyôhô era (1730) and died in the first year of the Tenmyô era (1781) at the age of 52.

Illustration 24. Shôhaku's gravestone (prior to restoration), Collection of Kôshôji Temple.

Needless to say, we don't have any information about the way in which Shôhaku, who was born into a merchant family, became a painter, but according to legend, he studied under Takada Keihô (1673-1755). Keihô was the disciple of Kanô Sansetsu's son Kanô Einô (1631-97), and among Keihô's verified works, I have only seen "Plum Trees" (*Bokubai-zu*; in the collection of Tokyo University of Fine Arts). He was a character discussed in *Continued Biographies of Eccentrics in the Early Modern Era* (*Kinsei kijin-den zoku*), and according to this short work, he possessed a similarly unique personality. Momosawa Josui, who appears later, said about Keihô's style, "he would become depressed in very dramatic ways, and he also obstinately avoided the use of color in paintings." Perhaps this person had some sort of influence upon the development of Shôhaku's painting style. In addition, I'd like to draw your attention to the fact that Sansetsu, in this lineage of teachers, used the name (*go*) of Jasoku Ken that Shôhaku

mentioned, and Sansetsu's painting style also displays a strangeness similar to that of Shôhaku's paintings. One can see this characteristic in Sansetsu's way of painting landscapes even after he studied under artists in the Unkoku school. However, in the development of Shôhaku's painting style, one group that is thought to have influenced him rather directly is the Soga school.

The Soga school was a powerful school of Chinese painting that began in the Muromachi era and continued until the beginning of the Edo period, but the way in which their ideas were applied are often vague. According to art biographies from the middle of the Edo period, it is said that Yi Chuman (Japanese: Ri Shubun) came to Japan from China during the Ming Dynasty, succeeded Soga, vassal of Echizen Asakura, and founded the Soga school. Several of Shubun's works were already known at the time, and according to Tani Bunchô and others, people said that his peculiar painting style indicated that he was probably Korean. This was indeed the case; the fact that he was an artist who came to Japan in the first half of the fifteenth century has recently been more or less ascertained through analysis of the inscriptions on his artworks. It has been said that Shikibu Jasoku, famous as the artist of the sliding door paintings at Shinjuan temple, was the son of Shubun. However, it seems that he was merely one among many teachers that stopped in Echizen and served the Asakura family, and it is presumed that it was Soga Chokuan who moved out from there to Sakai city at the beginning of the Momoyama era.

Chokuan ranks among such people as Kaihoku Tomomatsu, Hasegawa Tôhaku, and Unkoku Tôgan as a unique painter who, using Sakai city as his base, actively participated in the Momoyama painting community during the Keichô era (1596-1615). His artworks are based upon Muromachi kanga paintings (Song-style and Yuan-style painting), particularly the conservative style of Shubun's painting lineage. His works employ deeply saturated ink and rough brushwork. He possesses a strange, obstinate style in which he distorts the forms of trees and rocks. Chokuan's painting lineage was inherited by his son Nichokuan and others, but by around the middle of the Edo era, he was forgotten. Shôhaku discovered the Soga style and affirmatively adopted it into his

own style. For example, when looking at the previously mentioned "Immortals" (*Gunsen-zu byôbu*), this stylistic influence is clearly shown in the trees with hollows that resemble the suckers of an octopus as well as in the depiction of rocks that look like the remains of trees chopped down with a hatchet. Of course, the reason why Shôhaku came to think of himself as the successor to this lineage, calling himself "Jasoku the Tenth," was simply because Nichokuan made a family tree of the Soga school in which the first generation was Shikibu Jasoku, and in which Nichokuan called himself "the grandchild of Jasoku the Sixth."

It is thought that Shôhaku first began calling himself "Jasoku the Tenth" at an extremely young age – probably the latter half of his twenties. In terms of the time period, this was the Hôreki era (1751-1764) which began the latter half of the eighteenth century. During this period, the elite painting community was a seedbed of literati painting - that is to say, they were fostering a new Chinese painting style that was imported from China during the Qing Dynasty. Ike Taiga, the amazing bud of talent, was pursuing the success of "Japanese-style literati painting." Maruyama Ôkyo was abundantly producing *megane-e* (stereoscopic paintings), which were based upon a system of perspective drawing imported from Europe, and this was also the period when he prepared the basis of his later "philosophy of life painting." In the previous chapter, I discussed how the fantastic painter Jakuchû advocated a painting style based upon "things" and became absorbed in life painting and the observation of chickens. Among these new trends in the painting community, why was Shôhaku, who was second to no one in terms of talent and skill, persuaded to follow the Soga school, a relic of the previous era? Of course, nothing written by the artist himself that explains this decision remains. The only clear thing we know is that the eccentric elements of the painting style of the Soga school and the dignified title "Jasoku the Tenth" were employed by Shôhaku entirely as a vehicle for his sarcastic self-expression.

As a curious example that escalates the pompous nature of the title "Jasoku the Tenth," the following inscription is written on the painting "Hawk" (*Taka-zu*; in the collection of Mr. Murayama Nagataka [1894-1977]):

Painted by Jasoku Ken Soga Sakonjirô Teruo Nyûdô Shôhaku, the 14th generation descendant of The Great Founding Emperor of the Ming Dynasty[6]

On the back of the lid of the box in which the scroll is contained, the following explanation about this inscription is written:

Regarding this hawk painting, Xiao Zhao (蕭照; Japanese: Shôshô; 1130-62), distant descendant of Xiao He (蕭何; Japanese: Shôka; d. 193 BCE) of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-24 CE) was admired by Emperor Huangdi (1082-1135) of the Song Dynasty (Northern: 960-1127; Southern: 1125-1200). His bird-and-flower paintings showed extraordinarily talent. At first, the emperor employed Xiao Zhao as a teacher, and he made good hawk paintings. Later, Xiao Lan (蕭瀾; Japanese: Shôran), assistant to the founders of the great Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), near the end of Xiao Zhao's (1130-62) life also made good hawk paintings. And Emperor Huangdi made these paintings. The great founder, the Crown Prince Yiwen (懿文; Japanese: Ibun) employed Xiao Lan (蕭瀾; Japanese: Shôran) as a teacher. His child Shûbun (early 15c) came to Japan and lived in Echizen. He (Shûbun) was the true father of Jasoku (d. 1483).[7]

If I were to add a few annotations to these quotes, Shôka was a servant of the great founders of the Han dynasty, and Shôshô (1130-62) was a famous artist in the Southern Song painting school and was definitely a historical figure. However, I can't believe that they were related.

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[6] 明大祖皇帝十四世玄孫蛇足軒曽我左近次郎暉雄入道蕭白画.

[7] 此鷹ノ絵ハ漢ノ蕭何ノ末孫蕭照ト云人仕
宋ノ徽宗皇帝ニ此人好
画花鳥之妙手タリ
皇帝始而蕭照ヲ師トシ鷹ヲヨクス
後々大明ノ大祖ノ近臣蕭瀾ハ蕭照之末葉ニシテ赤鷹ヲヨクス
是則徽宗皇帝之為
伝来大祖ノ皇子懿文皇帝蕭瀾ヲ師トス
其子秀文日本へ来り越前ニ住ス是則蛇足ノ実父也.

Translator's note: The dates cited for each character are based upon the views of contemporary historians. The dates currently ascribed to Xiao Zhao and Emperor Huangdi obviously contradict Shôhaku's inscription.

The artist referred to as Shôran, who served the first emperor (Hongwu; Japanese: Kôbutei; 1328-98) of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and who taught painting to the first crown prince Yiwen (懿文; Japanese: Ibun; also known as Zhubiao [朱標; Japanese: Shuhyô]; 1355-92) is someone I have never heard of before.

About Shûbun, since, as I previously mentioned, he was not a citizen of Ming China but rather was born in Korea, the idea that he was the son of Yiwen is extremely suspicious. That doubtful lineage was not written by Shôhaku himself, but rather, needless to say, probably an owner of his work who he had never met. In short, Shôhaku was said to have traced his own lineage back to Jasoku and Shûbun and finally to a descendant of the first Ming Emperor, and this verges on being an exaggerated publicity stunt, but before classifying it as delusional insanity, here again we should interpret this as the finest kind of paradoxical sarcasm aimed at that era in which lineages and titles were regarded so highly.

History of Deviant Artists in the Early Modern Period (*Kinsei itsujin gashi*), published forty years after Shôhaku died and written by the erudite scholar from Edo, Okada Choken (also known as Nakao Choken, d. 1821), says that Shôhaku was born in Ise. An examination of his grave and the registry at Kôshôji temple that I mentioned earlier has weakened the grounds for this theory, but there is no lack of reason for the Ise-birth theory. In the eighth and ninth years of the Hôreki era (1758-9) – in other words, from the age of 29 through 30 – he roamed all around Ise and alarmed people with his eccentricity.

There are few records from the Edo period that tell of Jakuchû's comings and goings through Ise City, but in the eighth year of the Bunka era (1811), thirty years after Shôhaku died, Mori Kosen (1743-1848), a wealthy merchant from Matsusaka City (Mie Prefecture), published *Tales of the Hôreki Era* (*Hôreki hanashi*), a kind of memoir, in which he writes:

A painter by the name of Shôhaku came into the Yanagiya shop, and because of his extremely grotesque behavior, nobody did anything to assist him.

Also, according to the book *Hanbaku Zawa*, written by the local literatus Moritori Nagashi (and which is believed to have been published during the Bunsei era [1818-1830]), while in Ise, Shôhaku "was supposedly drunk all the time and rode on the back of a palanquin or in the cargo hold, playing his *shamisen* (lute)." Even according to these fragmented accounts, Shôhaku's conduct in Ise can be imagined, but the episodes of Shôhaku that remained in abundance all throughout Ise City until the Meiji era further reinforce this image of him. When Momosawa Josui (1873-1906), a painter who studied under Hashimoto Gaho, spent the final years of his life in Ise City, he decided to investigate traces of Shôhaku, and in Meiji 39 (1906), he published notes about his discoveries in the magazine *Japanese Art* (*Nihon bijutsu*). Let me introduce two or three quotes from that text.

In a village next to Matsusaka lived a wealthy farmer. While on his way home from an errand, when he got to the base of Kongôsaka hill, he came upon a young man who had collapsed on the roadside. Near his head was a zuda-bukuro *(bag worn around the neck of a Buddhist priest in which rosary beads etc are placed during ascetic practice) and something that looked like a paintbrush lay close to his head. Upon gently arousing him and inquiring what the matter was, he said that he was a painter and that he was resting since he couldn't walk so early in the morning due to hunger. Since, the farmer couldn't just leave him there, he kindly brought him home to the farm. This seems to have been the first time Shôhaku stayed in Ise and painted there.*

Kuroda village is a village just two ri *outside of Tsu City in which there is a surprisingly large temple called Jôkôji. Shôhaku came to this place and was there for about one year. Everyday in the summer time, Shôhaku went to the main hall of the temple and napped there. One day, he went to the main hall without eating breakfast. Later, I inquired about whether he had been sleeping since the morning. Since it had already become his habit, I didn't consider this behavior to be particularly strange. However, he didn't emerge at noon, and he didn't come out at night either. So I went to the main hall to see what was the matter. Shôhaku wasn't there, and nearby there was a ladder. Upon looking carefully, there were posts*

> *in the middle of the left and right walls of the* naijin *(area of the temple where the idols or sacred objects are placed), and a wall of cloth nine-*shaku *wide (about nine feet wide) had been stretched across these posts. On the exterior face of this wall were painted the sixteen arhats, and grapes were painted on the transom window (the window above sliding doors), but there was no trace of the artist himself. It seems that, after Shôhaku finished painting these, he departed for somewhere.*
>
> *While painting a gilded folding screen for Hisai Yoshi, Shôhaku came to be a freeloader. Everyday, he drank wine and ate a lot, but as before, he didn't paint anything. For a while, he bragged about himself, but since this request was very serious, one day, he was urged to work. He then decided to paint. He prepared a great deal of ink, poured it into a bowl, and also prepared such precious painting materials as Prussian blue, ultramarine blue and gold paint. He lined up about fifteen pairs of folding screens and spread them around that area. Then he grabbed a broom (*sôryo hôki*), painted a curved line with it onto one of the folding screens. With his remaining energy, he painted the portrait of the* karô *(the supervisor of activities within the house), and with that, he casually left. The* karô *was furious about Shôhaku's contempt, but since the artist had already left, there was nothing he could do. When looking at the screen, he could almost make out an image in the areas where the ink had dried, and when all of it had dried, a brilliant, seven-color rainbow appeared.*

I assume that the passage of time has embellished the facts and led to this unflattering story, but it is certain that Shôhaku's sarcastic Bohemianism and unconventional manner of painting left an intense impression in the hearts of ordinary, peaceful people.

There are various other stories of Shôhaku's eccentric behavior besides those about incidents that occurred during his wanderings through Ise. An artist named Katsuyama Takushû, who belonged to the lineage of Kanô Tanyû, had painted a pedestrian bridge in Sano City, and when Shôhaku saw this painting on a cool evening one summer, he noticed that Takushû had added a handrail to his depiction of the bridge. Shôhaku felt that this was a disgrace to professional painters throughout the capital, and so he demanded that he repaint it. Takushû replied that he had followed the example of Tanyû in his depiction. An argument ensued, Shôhaku took out his knife and he slashed

at Takushû until finally those people standing nearby subdued him. At a meeting of portrait painters in Higashiyama, Shôhaku noticed that the artists who were painting figures only painted as low as the model's waist, at which point he suddenly dipped his own facecloth into some ink and continued to paint the figures from the waist down. Also, when the chief priest of Honganji temple sent a messenger to Shôhaku's home to order a painting, the messenger stood in front of Shôhaku's gate and called out in a haughty manner, "I am the chief priest's messenger. Is Shôhaku here?" At this point, a loud voice replied from within the house, "Shôhaku isn't here!" As a result, the messenger ran away. He had a terrible temper and an insolent manner, and it seems that in some ways his personality resembled that of Ueda Akinari (1734-1809).

The notes of Momosawa Josui record a great deal about the artworks of Shôhaku that were left all over Ise at that time. The inscription "Painted at the age of thirty" on the images of arhats at Jôkôji, which I mentioned before, is one example, and there have been others, such as at Sairaiji Temple in Tera district of Tsu City, where there was a sliding-door painting of "Seven Sages in a Bamboo Grove" (*Chikurin shichiken*), upon was supposedly written "Age 29." Tennenji temple in the same Tera district similarly possessed Shôhaku's large-scale sliding-door paintings. Unfortunately, most of these have been lost, but while there are only a few, some such works are still extant. The large-scale, polychromatic work on silk "Sessan Dôji Offering his Life to an Ogre" (*Sessan Dôji-zu*; Plate 27) in the collection of Keishôji temple in Matsusaka City depicts a legend in which Shakyamuni, in his previous incarnation as a bodhisattva was practicing asceticism on Mount Sessan in the Himalayas. During this time, he threw himself in front of a demon in order to increase his understanding of the Truth. The gaudiness of the colors and the vividness of the depiction are identical to those of "Immortals." Also identical in these regards are a painting on a door of Japanese cedar (*sugido-e*) and an ink-painting mural at Chôdenji temple in Matsusaka City. This mural, located on both sides of the altar in the main hall, is comprised of two large paintings, each of which is 2.5 meters wide and about 2.25 meters high. On them, a male and

female lion dog (*shishi*; Plate 29) are roughly scribbled with a brush like a split piece of bamboo. The force of the brushwork reminds one of the return of Kanô Eitoku, the breadth of whose spirit was described as truly strange (*kaikai kiki*). Among paintings of the Edo period, works that make viewers feel an explosion of such intense pathos as this are rare. When the local people saw this work, they must have been astonished.

Illustration 25. "Stone Bridge."

Through these artworks left behind in Matsusaka and "Immortals" that Shôhaku painted when he was thirty-five years old, we know that Shôhaku's heterodoxical style had already been established in an early period of his life from the end of his twenties through the first half of his thirties, but the development of his style after that time until he died at the age of fifty-two is difficult to gauge since there are few works in which we know the date of completion. However, if we look at works such as "Stone Bridge" (*Sekibashi-zu*; Illustration 25) that was inscribed in the 8th year of the An'ei era (1779), two years before his death, it seems that he continued to preserve his eccentric, individual personality his painting style in his late years and that he added a degree of delicacy and flexibility to his painting style.

The number of artworks that Shôhaku left behind in his rather brief life span is not as high as those of Ôkyo and Taiga, but there are quite a lot, and the subject matter ranges from landscapes and bird-and-flower paintings to figure paintings. Looking at his entire oeuvre, the certainty of his knowledge about the craft of painting and the breadth of his expression are extremely impressive.

Most of Shôhaku's landscape paintings are constructive works reminiscent of formal-style painting (*kaitai*), and in them, one of the canons of traditional Northern Chinese painting (*hokuga*), structural method in the use of the brush, is perfectly managed. However, he reverses the direction of the academic techniques to express a

unique world. By means of saturated ink that creates areas of breathtaking tonal contrast, this wild, fantastic, otherworldly landscape is constructed of formless boulders that seem to be oozing like lava, other boulders that, like the cliffs of the Alps, plunge acutely into the void beneath them, and trees that, though slightly resembling poisonous bamboo shoots or umbrella goblins, are ultimately indescribable. "Landscape in Moonlight" (*Getsuya sansui-zu byôbu*; Illustration 26), a pair of six-fold screens originally owned by Mr. Nakaoka of Kyoto, represents this kind of work. Like "Castle in a Landscape" (*Rôkaku sansui-zu oshi-e hari-byôbu*; in the collection of Tokyo University of Arts and Music; Plate 30), it is a work that displays an original attempt to reduce rocks, buildings and trees into pseudo-cubist, geometric figures.

Illustration 26. "Landscape in Moonlight," detail.

If we roughly trace back to its origin this kind of eccentric style in which Shôhaku paints landscapes, we would eventually encounter the so-called Rikaku style found in Northern Song landscape paintings from the 10th through the 11th century that use as motifs wild and bizarre images of nature in Northern China. This style was popular in the Yuan and Ming dynasties as a revival style, and it was also transmitted to Korea, where artists added a particular, dark expressionism. By means of artists such as Shûbun, this style was further transplanted in Japan during the Muromachi era, and after a period of time, this style suddenly and unexpectedly popped up in Shôhaku's landscape paintings.

Among his figure paintings, the polychromatic "Immortals" that I previously discussed is a representative work in which Shôhaku discovered his real ability. However, also famous among his large-scale ink paintings is "Hanshan and Shide" (*Kanzan Jittoku-zu*; Illustration 27), a pair of hanging scrolls, each of which is more than two meters long, that is owned by Kôshôji temple. The appearance of these ugly, unusual giants who can be defined as neither human nor beast, painted in a style that truly "is like dipping a handful of straw in ink and stirring it around on the painting's surface," makes the muscles in a viewer's back go cold. In terms of grotesquerie, it cannot be compared to any other works in the history of Japanese figurative ink painting, and if you were to compare them to figures painted by the Zhe school in the 16th century Ming dynasty, a school that was called "the school of eccentricity," you would clearly not be able to help but say that this was the source of Shôhaku's style. This goblin-like image of Hanshan and Shide is reminiscent of a few fierce artworks in Shôhaku's particularly exalted repertoire that are no less important than the works of Kôshôji.

On one hand, in "Four Pure Souls on Mount Shôzan" (*Shôzan shikô-zu byôbu*; in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Illustration 28), that shows four hermits drinking wine and chatting under a tree, the depiction of an enormous tree is reminiscent of the paintings of Kanô Eitoku (1543-90), and the brawny, simplified characters make one think of the influence of Hakuin's pictures. It emits a positive humor in contrast to the image of Hanshan and Shide. Also, "Immortals" (*Gunsen-zu nikyoku byôbu*; Collection of Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music; Plate 31) is a work in which the same motifs as in the polychromatic "Immortals" that I previously discussed are handled in ink and gold paint. However, the fine-grained, radical line-work reminiscent of an etching and the dry harmony between black and white display a fine and lucid sense that is one aspect of Shôhaku's personality. One can point to the same acute sense in "Immortals Li Tieguai and Liu Haichan" (*Gama Tekkai zu-byôbu*; Collection of Tokyo National Museum) in which the wild hair of Tieguai, who has a goblin-like facial appearance, is described in detail. "Ogress under Willow Tree" (*Ryuka*

kijo-zu; Collection of Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music; Plate 32) is, as the title implies,

Illustration 27. "Hanshan and Shide." Collection of Kôshôji Temple.

Illustration 28. "Four Pure Souls on Mount Shôzan," Right Screen. Collection of Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

a painting of an ogress, but in the same way, rather than calling it a rough painting, on the contrary, the clarity of the delicate, expert brushwork heightens the terrifying effect of the subject matter.

In the polychromatic "Immortals," Chinese beauties reminiscent of the final period of Ukiyo-e are painted, but rarely did Shôhaku make paintings devoted to the genre of beauties as it was known at the time. "Beauty" (*Bijin-zu*; Illustration 29) in the collection of Mr. Yûra Tetsuji, is a standing pose of a crazed beauty that appears to be a scene from the Kabuki play "Summer Madness" (*Onatsu kyôran*). However, it is a work in which one cannot overlook the history of the depiction of beauties in Ukiyo-e: Shôhaku's particular sense about such things as her messed-up skirt, her red inner kimono (*kedashi*), and her thick, sensual lips tells of how a type of late-Edo, decadent beauty was already being prepared in Kyoto more than half a century beforehand.

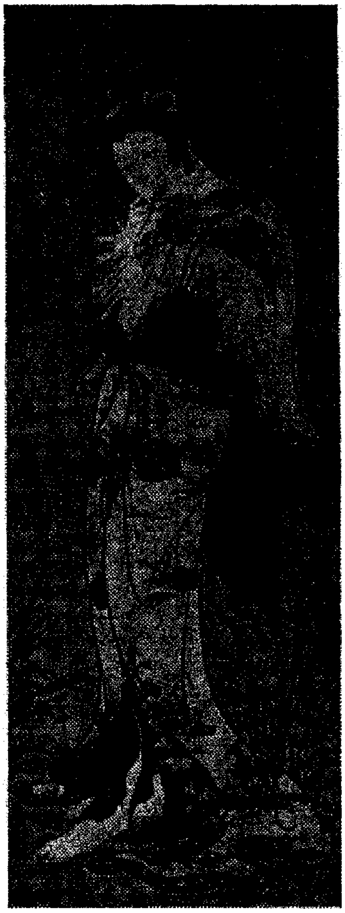


Illustration 29. "Beauty." Collection of Mr. Yûra.

"Children at Play" (*Gundo yûgi-zu byôbu*; Illustration 30) is a rare, large-scale genre painting in which beauties appear in a pastoral summer scene along a riverbank. (Unfortunately, the current location of this artwork is unknown.) All of the wicked children, with their blue noses running, are wearing slightly unsettling facial expressions, and the entire scene is filled with an unusual, eerie atmosphere.

The polychromatic "Hawk" in the collection of Mr. Murayama is offered as an example of Shôhaku's work with the theme of flowers, birds and animals. This work continues the repertoire of hawk images in which Chokuan and Nichokuan specialized. This depiction that surpasses the bird paintings of both Jakuchû and Ôkyo, and to it, Shôhaku adds the coloration found in *yamato-e* images of autumn grasses. It is a dense work in which the artist's deformation of the bird's body and the vivid yellow of its talons emphasizes its ferocity and creates an impressive effect. I have already mentioned about the inscription on

Illustration 30. "Children at Play," Left Screen.

this painting that says, "the 14th generation descendant of The Great Founding Emperor of the Ming Dynasty."

As simplified ink paintings of birds and flowers, works such as "Dragon and Tiger" (*Ryûko-zu*; Plate 33) in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Art and "Group of Chickens" (*Gunkei-zu*) are works in which Shôhaku discovers his real ability. "Group of Chickens," painted in the *mokkotsu* style,[8] has an acute sense unlike in Jakuchû's chickens, as if we could hear a metallic buzz emanating from the passionate brushwork. In "Dragon and Tiger," the face of the tiger, sunk into its trunk is if it was just recently flattened with a roller like a *noshiika* (a delicacy consisting of flattened squid), has a reproachful look. I presume that such a bizarre metamorphosis as is shown in this tiger's body is difficult to even find in contemporary comic books.

At one time, Shôhaku said, partly as a joke, "If you want a painting, you should ask me; if you want a pretty picture, you should go ask Maruyama Shusui." I take this statement as a sharp criticism of art styles, including Ôkyo's so-called "realism," that

[8] Translator's note: *mokkotsu* = a style of Asian painting, particularly bird-and-flower paintings, in which ink or pigment are applied directly to the subject without the use of outlines. Also known as "boneless technique."

produce empty, meaningless imagery, but to some extent, I also detect a sense of envy about the fame that his rival enjoyed in the Kyoto painting community. On the other hand, Shôhaku seems to have had a strangely good rapport with Ike Taiga, another vendor at the time. According to a famous story, once when they bumped into each other at the buckwheat noodle shop, Taiga invited Shôhaku to go there to eat together sometime. Shôhaku responded immediately, visited Taiga's home, and spent time chatting, but they became so absorbed in their conversation that they completely forgot to eat the noodles. They stayed late into the evening, and when they headed home, Shôhaku didn't have a lantern, so Taiga offered him his, and Shôhaku used it to get home. It is believed that this was because they identified each other as brethren eccentrics (*kijin*), because Taiga's well-rounded and carefree personality had the ability to unravel Shôhaku's obstinacy, and because Shôhaku's subjective philosophy about painting was surprisingly similar to that of a literati painter.

Shôhaku bragged about how fast he could paint, saying that he started by painting a figure's toes and finished by painting his head. He derided Taiga's slow brushwork as inconvenient, and it is said that he was chided by Taiga, but it seems that the sharp-minded Shôhaku couldn't forget that he had incorporated the merits of Taiga's way of painting into his own style. Among the works by Shôhaku that I have recently seen, I was deeply interested in "Mount Fuji and Miho no Matsubara" (*Fuji Miho-zu byôbu*; Plate 34) that has recently gained public attention and has entered the collection of the American Mr. Powers. It is mounted on a folding screen (*oshi-e hari-byôbu*) that was brought about an even high degree of artistic fruition by means of Taiga's influence. It was painted in a seemingly fun, Taiga-esque style to the point of imitating the handwriting in Taiga's signature. Various aspects, such as the odd shape of Mount Fuji, towering on the left side and the way in which the fields that surround it stretch all the way down to sea level, are very typical of Shôhaku, and the panoramic vista of the Mino pine forest on the right side is impressive. The many islands and distant mountains are sensitively melded together in light ink washes, and he depicts the fresh expansiveness of the atmosphere after a rainfall. A little bit of light coloration in the rainbow glimmers

like a wet jewel. The fresh feeling of the color and the sense of space even surpasses these kind of pictures painted by Taiga. Even those people who are annoyed by the degree of obstinacy in Shôhaku's pictures need to alter their perception of the artist when standing in front of this painting.

Shôhaku is definitely a painter who was forgotten here for several decades. However, upon tracing the public's former appraisal of him, it becomes obvious that he was extremely popular at least in the Meiji era. For example, in the graveyard of Kôshôji temple, in the 41st year of the Meiji era (1908), a splendid gravestone two-meter tall with an inscription written by Tomioka Tessai was erected by the organizer of a historical society *(onko-kai)*. (Ironically, though, in order to do so, the original gravestone that Shôhaku erected himself was lost.) Also, at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, there is a huge collection of works by Shôhaku – as many as fifty pieces, including such works as the aforementioned "Four Pure Souls on Mount Shôzan" (*Shôzan shikô-zu byôbu*) and "Dragon and Tiger" (*Ryûko-zu*). These are works that Bigelow, who stayed in Japan for seven years starting in the 14th year of Meiji (1881), took back to the States with him.

In the 26th year of the Meiji era (1893), the following explanation of "Hawk" (*Taka-zu*), which is in the collection of Mr. Murayama, appeared in the journal *Kokka*:

> *If one looks at the rare bird-and-flower painting of Mr. Murayama appearing in this issue, it is something that makes one want to shake Shôhaku's hand and cry.*[9]

It is interesting that, not surprisingly, the author raves about the painting in a way that would even have made Shôhaku blush.

Regarding Shôhaku's popularity from the time of his death through the end of the Edo era, considering the fact that forgeries made during this period are surprisingly numerous, it seems as if he had quite a following, and if you look at biographies of painters published at the time, the following passage by Shiroi Kayô, author of *Gajô*

[9] 本号掲載スル所ノ村山氏珍襲ノ花鳥図ヲ観レハ其レ必ヲスヤータヒ蕭白ト其手ヲ握リ相対シテ泣カント欲スルモノアラン.

yôryaku (published in the 2nd year of the Tempô era [1831]), is a bit stiff, but anyways he gives Shôhaku a favorable evaluation.

"I once saw Shôhaku's painting of a beauty playing the harp, and her appearance was like that of a demon. At that time, I disliked it. In his recent painting style, when he depicts a beauty, he tries as much as possible to make her appear voluptuous and lustrous, but ultimately Shôhaku's works are individualistic and strange. One ought to say that he has guts. Perhaps painters these days wouldn't be so inferior if they followed his example. Occasional works by Shôhaku that display a slightly frank style are quite comparable to those of the great painters of the past."

Nakabayashi Chikudô (1776-1853) was a literati painter with a wicked tongue who was active at the end of the Edo period. In his books *Thoughts by Chikudô on Painting* (*Chikudô garon*) and *Gadô kôgôsho*, which were based upon his own personal theories of painting, he condemned painters working in the tradition of Ôkyô as "painter-fairies" and launched at them an unending stream of the most offensive verbal abuse, saying that their paintings were saccharine and lacking in truth like the chatter of a prostitute. He also disparaged Shôhaku, saying, "He's a pervert who relies solely upon his talent, and such ability has a negative effect upon the field of painting." It seems that in some way the unexpected popularity of Shôhaku's eccentric style offended Chikudô. In his work "Evaluation of Past and Recent Painters and Paintings" (*Kokon gajinhin hyô*), he constructed the category "Perversion" (*ja*) especially for Shôhaku and classified Ôkyô along with two other artists in the category "Saccharine" (*amattarui*). At least we can say that he gave more attention to Shôhaku than he did to Ôkyô.

If this is so, regarding the public evaluation of Shôhaku during his lifetime, Fujioka Sakutarô, in his famous work *History of Early Modern Painting* (*Kinsei kaigashi*, Meiji 36 [1903]), says the following. To paraphrase, it says that while Shôhaku possesses superior skill in painting, his anachronistic style was not publicly acceptable, and for this reason, his passionate and envious personality became increasingly distorted, reaching the point at which he painted pictures that epitomized the grotesquerie and desolation that he perceived. However, to some extent, I disagree with this opinion. For

example, let us consider the *History of Figures in the Capital* (*Heian jinbutsushi*), a record of famous persons in Kyoto that was published in the 4th year of the An'ei era (1775), at which point Shôhaku was 46 years old. The names of twenty painters who represented the Kyoto painting scene at the time are listed, including Ôkyô, Jakuchû, Taiga, and Buson, and towards the end of the list, one finds Shôhaku's name. Also, though many forgeries exist among the Shôhaku paintings left at locations (mostly temples) in such areas as Ise and the Sanyô district, there are also definitely more than a few authentic works. More than anything else, these artifacts attest to the positive public appraisal and demand for his works during his lifetime, and this is the reason why I disagree with Fujioka's opinion. Regarding Shôhaku's paintings, the description of his "wanderings" between Kyoto and the province of Settsu (modern-day Osaka and Hyogo Prefectures) in *History of Deviant Artists in the Early Modern Period* (*Kinsei itsujin gashi*) seems to not necessarily be an exaggeration. It seems undeniable that at times ordinary people frowned at his naturally eccentric personality and that he displayed a side of his personality that people called demented, but on the other hand, it is believed that there were also more than a few people who secretly rejoiced in his extremely merry attitude towards daily life and in his artistic output. Shôhaku as well sufficiently understood this, and I wonder if perhaps he at times he decided to merely play the role of "The Lunatic." Even in the figures in the polychromatic "Immortals," which represents his maniacal painting style, the frightful degree of care and accurate brushwork that we can see in his execution of detailed patterns in their hair and clothing speak of the clear consciousness of a painter who orchestrates the effects of "perversion."

Previously, I pointed out the wave painted in the polychromatic "Immortals" and said that we can consider this a precedent for Hokusai's "Wave off of the Shore of Kanagawa." Certainly, we can say that Shôhaku and Hokusai closely resembled one another as a type of artist. Even if the conservative and contemporary nature of Hokusai's work indicates a difference between them, a dry, thoughtless imagination, a spirit of spectacle, a compulsion for bizarre forms of expression, an assertive vulgarity, and the popular approval upon which these characteristics were based might be called the

essential common elements connecting these two artists. Within the works of Shôhaku that I have shown and that turned inside-out the so-called "oppressive coat of tradition" – that is, the extremely classical atmosphere of the stagnant, former capital – one can find works that foretell the expression of ukiyo-e that blossomed in Edo half a century later at the end of the Tokugawa era, and I believe that this foreshadowing has surprisingly deep significance.

Fortunately, after having put into words what I have written up until now about Shôhaku, Mr. Hickman of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts came to Japan to conduct research on Shôhaku. He is a likeable person, unsophisticated in appearance and with a gentle feel, and his wife is Japanese. He pulled out a shower of photographs showing details of Shôhaku's works in Boston, and in a serious explanation comparing various elements, we could sympathize with each other as fellow sufferers of this passion about Shôhaku.

Among the photographs that Mr. Hickman brought with him, there were several extremely interesting works from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts collection that he showed me such as "Parody of Kume the Transcendent" ("Kume no sennin-zu"), a work painted at the age of thirty – the earliest work by Shôhaku I had seen up until then, as well as "Hawk" ("Taka-zu"), believed to be a preparatory work for an enormous painting. Among them, something that I unconsciously screamed about was the large work "Dragon in Clouds" ("Unryû-zu," Plate 28; Illustration 31), which I was pleased to see could be included among the illustrations for this book; a work that bears the inscription, "Painted by Soga Shôhaku at the belated age of 34 years old."

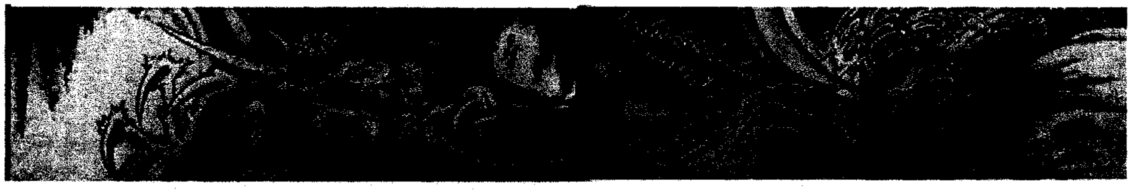


Illustration 31. "Dragon in Clouds." Collection of Boston Museum of Fine Art.

In my estimation, it seems to be a work in which eight sheets of paper were torn away from both sides of a continual composition that may have been installed in a room in which a Buddhist sculpture or a memorial tablet was enshrined at a temple somewhere (perhaps in Ise). The center of the image is missing, but that isn't a problem.

Is this nothing-less-than extraordinary beast perhaps a dragon originally painted in black ink by someone such as Soga Chokuan or Kaihô Yûshô and then transformed by means of Shôhaku's magic? A particular characteristic of his paintings, a dry, metallic grotesquerie swells and rises here into an overwhelming image – without any more explanation, by simply looking at the plate, let us firstly be content with the fact that this is the most skilled of the works by Shôhaku that we know. If we combine this work in our minds with "Immortals," which bears the inscription "Painted at the age of 35 years old," then it seems that the period when Shôhaku was 34-35 years old was when his amazing endowment of imagination reached a boiling point.

As the story goes, up until two years ago, this shocking painting of a dragon in the clouds was long believed to be a forgery, and during that time, it lay on the far side of the Boston MFA storeroom until one day, Mr. Hickman happened to find it, and from that point, at last, he has been obsessed with Shôhaku. Among the large number of artworks that the pair Fenalossa and Bigelow brought back to America are works like the "Tale of Heiji Handscroll" (*Heiji monogatari emaki*) whose loss breaks the hearts of Japanese who have passed on to the next life, but if they hadn't "discovered" these works in the Meiji era, it is believed that works such as this picture, which seems at a glance to be an oddity, along with many similar sliding-door panels painted by Shôhaku, would have disappeared, and upon thinking about the matter this way, we ought to be thankful for Fenalossa's and Bigelow's contributions.

I toured Mr. Hickman around, and one day in the late autumn, we visited Keishôji, Chôdenji, and Kansôji, and seeing a painting by Shôhaku which still remains in Matsusaka City.

Here in Japan as well, such works as the mural painting of the Chinese temple dogs at Chôdenji have slept for many years amidst people's apathy, and because they

were receiving attention for the first time in many years, they were covered with dust, the cracks in the surface of the painting had become terrible, and their immediate restoration was requested. At any rate, the high quality of the Shôhaku paintings possessed by those temples are important works, but in the opinion of Mr. Hickman, who seemed to be thinking that most of the important works have been acquired by the Boston museum, the tour seemed to have been more than a little shocking. What pleased him even more was a tour by the chief priest of Chôdenji to an old house six kilometers away from the temple (next to Kongôzaka, where Momosawa Josui's notebooks are kept), we were able to view several sliding door panels painted by Shôhaku, and to myself as well, this was an unexpected encounter with unknown paintings by Shôhaku.

In this way, our pursuit of traces of Shôhaku is currently progressing at a truly fluid rate, and I am still filled with the thrill and jubilation in thinking that something else may pop up in the near future.

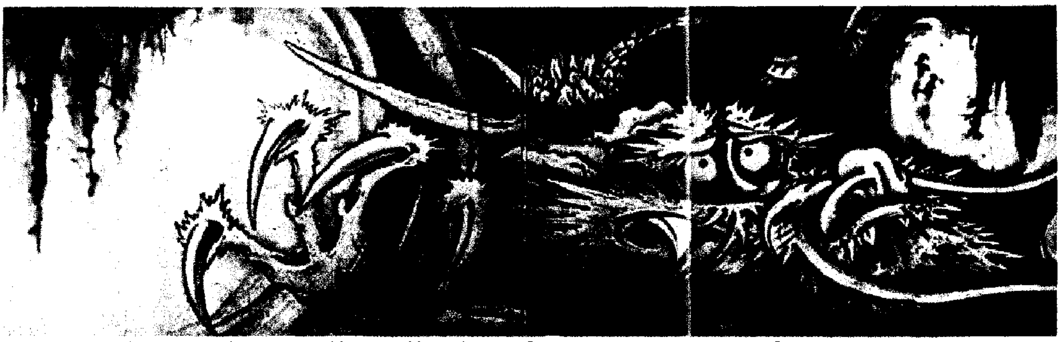
Chapter Four
Demented, Outcast Immortals: Soga Shôhaku
Plates

24. "Immortals," right screen, detail, collection of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

25. "Immortals," collection of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

26. "Hawk," detail. Collection of Mr. Murayama.

27. "Sessan Dôji Offering his Life to an Ogre," right screen, detail, Keishôji temple.



28. "Dragon in Clouds," detail. Collection of Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

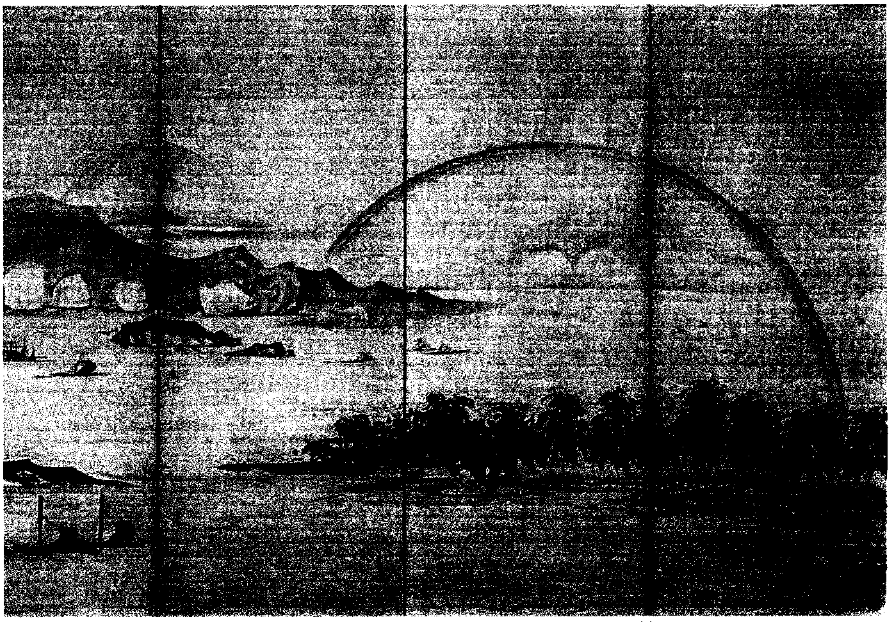
29. "Lion Dogs," detail, Chôdenji Temple.

30. "Castle in a Landscape," details, Tokyo University of Fine Art and Music.

31. "Immortals," right screen, detail, Tokyo University of Fine Art and Music.

32. "Ogress under Willow Tree," detail, Tokyo University of Fine Art and Music.

33. "Tiger," detail, Boston Museum of Fine Arts.



34. "Mount Fuji and Miho no Matsubara," right screen, detail.

Chapter Five
Birds, Beasts and Mischief: Nagasawa Rosetsu

> *His mind and hands were always moving, and since his life was tinged with an element of busyness, he seemed to have been the kind of character who could have appeared in an act at the Imperial Theater.*
>
> Aimi Kô'u (1874-1970)

Following Jakuchû and Shôhaku is Nagasawa Rosetsu, a disciple of Ôkyô who displayed amazing ability within the painting community of Kyoto.

Rosetsu was born in the 4th year of the Hôreki era (1754), and his father was Uesugi Kazusaemon, a soldier who was said to have first worked for Aoyama Shimotsuke no Kami in Tamba Sasayama (modern-day Hyogo Prefecture) and who was later transferred to Yodo (in Kyoto city) to work for Inaba Tango no Kami. As a child, it is said, he was adopted by Ashigaru Nagasawa of the Yodo clan and took the name of Nagasawa, but this legend has not been verified. In short, he grew up in Yodo as the son of a poor soldier from the lower class, and pursuing his love of painting, he frequented Ôkyô's studio, and in the process of improving his painting skills, he demonstrated rapid and remarkable improvement. Soon thereafter, he moved to the capital, and it seems that in the 2nd year of the Tenmei era (1782), at the age of 29, he had already set up his own workshop as the head pupil of Ôkyô. In the list of painters in the *Heian jinbutsu-shi* (*History of Individuals in Kyoto*) published the same year, Ôkyô is listed at the top, followed by Jakuchû and Buson, and though appearing quite a bit further down, Rosetsu's name also appears.

In the 6th year of the Tenmei era (1786), Gukai, a priest at Muryôji temple in Kushimoto city, Nanki (present-day Wakayama prefecture) visited Ôkyô, with whom he had always been close, and requested a set of sliding-door paintings for temples in Nanki such as Muryôji that were connected to the Tôfukuji sect. However, since at the time, Ôkyô found himself unable to travel to Nanki, the project was entrusted to Rosetsu.

From the end of that year until the beginning of the spring of the following year, the 7th year of the Tenmei era, he painted several sliding doors and folding screens for Jôjûji in Nishimukai district, Sôdôji in Tonda district, Kôzanji in Tanabe city, and of course Muryôji. Works such as "Tiger" at Muryôji which have received a great deal of attention in recent years are from this time period (from age 33 through age 34; see Plate 36 and Illustration 32).

Illustration 32. "Chickens among Roses," detail. Collection of Muryôji Temple.

Illustration 33. "Flock of Birds among the Waves and Rocks," detail. Yakushiji Temple.

If one were to take a quick look at his artistic production since this time, in the 2nd year of the Kansei era (at the age of 37; 1790), when the palace in Kyoto was reconstructed, he was ordered along with artists from the Kanô school, the Tosa school, and the school of Ôkyô to produce sliding-door paintings for the Imperial Residence (*Goryôsho*). In the 4th year of the Kansei era (1792), he donated "Monkeys" (*Saru-zu*), a

votive picture (*ema*), to Hie Shrine in Sakamoto district. Around Kansei 5, he painted such sliding-door paintings as "Landscape," "Flock of Birds among the Waves and Rocks" (*Iwanami Gunchô-zu*; Illustration 33), and "Tiger among the Pines" (*Shôko-zu*) for Yakushiji temple. In the 6th year of Kansei, he traveled to Hiroshima and painted "Sketchbook with Eight Views of Itsukushima" (*Itsukushima hakkei gachô*), and in the following year, the 7th year of Kansei, he collaborated with Ôkyô on a sliding-door painting at Daijôji temple Tajima (Hyogo Prefecture) and at that time painted "Group of Monkeys" (*Gun'en-zu*). In the 9th year of the Kansei era, he donated the famous work "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman" (*Yama'uba-zu*; Plate 41) to Itsukushima Shrine. Later, in the 11th year of Kansei (1799), he died in Osaka at the age of 46 years old.

By writing these accomplishments in this kind of resume-like fashion, it seems that, though he unfortunately died at a young age, this blessedly talented painter had a life in which his sails were constantly filled with a favorable wind. However, it seems as if, for some reason, his lifestyle was in fact not peaceful and free from incident. Rosetsu had one son, but he died at infancy, and though Rosetsu's apprentice Roshû became his heir, it is said that Roshû lost all the collected writings of his adoptive father's life in the war-fires of the Meiji Restoration. It is unfortunate, but perhaps Rosetsu's relative, the painter Takegawa Tomohiro, remembers the various strange acts of Rosetsu that were written there. Takegawa presents these memories in the article "The Tale of Rosetsu ("*Rosetsu monogatari*") written by old-man Aimi Kô'u, the great elder of the art history field who was born in Meiji 7 (1874).[1] According to that article, Rosetsu was expelled by his teacher three times. The statement that Rosetsu was temporarily expelled at least three times seems to be a fact, and in the book *Discussion of Famous Writers and Artists of the Early Modern Era* (*Kinsei meika shôga dan*; two volumes, published in 1844), Rosetsu's expulsion is recorded. The reason was that, when Rosetsu was asked to present his work to Ôkyô for critique, Rosetsu dared to submit the unmodified example-drawing that Ôkyô himself had made, whereupon Ôkyô criticized and slightly corrected it. When Rosetsu later corrected a drawing himself and brought it to Ôkyô, the teacher approved of

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[1] This article was published in the August Taishô 7 [1918] issue of *Chuô bijutsu* magazine.

it. Ôkyô was later informed of this trick, and Rosetsu was expelled. It isn't impossible that he was expelled for this reason, but when considering the fact that in the 7th year of the Kansei era Rosetsu and Ôkyô collaborated on the project at Daijôji temple, it seems that Ôkyô did not ultimately wash his hands of this abundantly talented student who could at any time offer a perfect copy of Ôkyô's own work. At any rate, it seems that this mischievousness was part of Rosetsu's nature, and it is expressed in his paintings.

According to "*Rosetsu monogatari*," the artist had various interests and talents: equestrianism, swimming, fencing and music, and a strange artform that would lead him nowhere: the refined ability to spin tops. One time, he was summoned by the leader of the Yodo clan to perform "top acrobatics" in front of the garden, and in the middle of his performance, a top that flew high up into the air came falling down and hit in the eye, and blood came gushing out. Rosetsu attempted to nonchalantly continue the performance, but one of the lord's assistants forcibly picked up the tops and stopped the performance. In this way, it is said, he lost one of his eyes. If that were so, it would be a grave injury to an artist, but I will touch upon this topic once again at a later time.

From the Tenmei era through the Kansei era, during which time Rosetsu was active as an artist, the person who played the role of a manager among the literati in Kyoto was Minagawa Kien (1734-1807), but in his later years, Rosetsu seemed to have become congenial friends with Kien. According to a popular story, they gathered people at a temple within the Gion district, and Rosetsu painted pictures, to which Kien added inscriptions. From one side of the room, buyers would enter, and to some extent, money entered both of their bags. With the money they made, they would hire a woman for the evening and go philandering until all the money they had earned was gone.

During the Kansei era, Kien became a promoter of public events and every spring and autumn organized what was called an "Exhibition of New Paintings and Calligraphy" ("Shin shoga tenkan"). One could call this event the forerunner of the *Kôboten* (a juried art exhibition). Each time, several hundred works were exhibited, and according to *The Collected Writings of Kien* (*Kien bunshû*), painters in Kyoto caught the attention of

visitors by "competing to see who could create the most original work." However, even in this environment, Rosetsu was viewed as a celebrity, and each time he exhibited an extremely eccentric work that startled viewers. Among them, it is said, the work that he exhibited in April of Kansei 10 (1798) was a depiction of the 500 arhats, along with extremely small figures such as a lion dog, an elephant, a dragon and a tiger, all on a scroll measuring one *sun* (3.03 cm) in each direction. According to an article in *Kien bunshû*, his death the following year while traveling through Osaka in June was known, but regarding the cause of death, the author of "*Rosetsu monogatari*" proposes the theory that he was poisoned. This theory speculates that he was poisoned by a member of the Yodo clan since he owed a great deal to the clan leader for various kinds of assistance and because his selfish behavior had provoked the leader's anger. There are many explanations, including one that reasons that, when the head of the Tosa clan (or perhaps the head of the Geishû clan) heard of Rosetsu's fame and invited him to become their resident artist, the current artist, overcome with envy, invited Rosetsu to see a performance in Osaka, and murdered him by putting poison in his box-lunch. These theories are unsubstantiated, but nevertheless old-man Aimi assumes that his death by poison in Osaka is a fact. Another possible theory that is introduced in "*Rosetsu monogatari*" is a rumor that arose soon after the incident. After Ôkyô's death, it states, Rosetsu felt great self-pride, but thereafter his painting deteriorated uncontrollably, and ultimately left penniless, he hung himself in Osaka. It is difficult to believe that he committed suicide due to financial problems, but at any rate, upon noticing these unpleasant rumors, we can imagine that there was some aspect of Rosetsu's attitude towards daily life that had provoked the antipathy of the common world. Perhaps a related episode occurred at a memorial held on the seventy-seventh day following Ôkyô's death in which Rosetsu, upon seeing his rival Goshun sit in the place of honor, cursed him aloud. Exploding with spirit and unparalleled dexterity, numerous interests and skills, his compulsive need for attention and his mischievousness, his extreme excess of self-confidence and arrogance – the image of this personality through oral rumors, if one were to sum it up in a single phrase, felt like a slightly more vulgar version of Shôhaku.

On many of the artworks by Rosetsu that remain in Nanki is impressed a seal, the Chinese character for "fish" within an outline of a tortoise shell, that is thought to perhaps have self-deprecating meaning. It seems as if he was extremely attached to this seal, and he used it until the end of his life, even after the surrounding outline was largely worn away. Regarding the origin of this eccentric (風変わりな) seal, the following episode is discussed in *Kinsei meika shôga dan*. During the time when Rosetsu was traveling from Yodo to Ôkyô's residence on Shijô avenue and finishing his training, on a cold winter morning, he passed along his way a small stream that was frozen. In the stream, he saw that a fish had gotten trapped in the ice and, unable to rise us, seemed to be suffering. As he was troubled by this sight, he took a peek at it on his way home, and upon doing so, he found that the ice had considerably melted, and the freed fish was happy. The following day, upon talking to his teacher about this incident, his teacher was interested, saying that Rosetsu during the years of his training also suffered but that along the way the "ice" had gradually melted and he gained versatility in painting. This interpretation was deeply engraved in his memory, and it is said that, until the end of his life, Rosetsu used that seal. This might be a true story, but I don't think his teacher had to labor hard or be patient for a long time in order for Rosetsu to acquire his skills and melt the ice wall. By the time he was in his twenties, he had already mastered the skills of his trade – techniques of ink painting, together with which Ôkyô had knit the shading methods of western painting – including one that we should call Ôkyô's patented method, *tsuketate* (applying ink without using an outline and gradating the ink [*bokashi*] on its surface – a technique by which Ôkyô imbued his work with three-dimensionality). Furthermore, it seems that he had polished his own additional skills. The work that he produced in Nanki at the age of 33 or 34 was an opportunity for him to vividly demonstrate this progress.

Various aspects of Rosetsu's natural disposition seem to have been integrated into the artworks that he left behind in Nanki such as the sliding-door paintings at Muryôji, Sôdôji and other temples.

The skill and level of expression that Rosetsu expresses in these works are astonishing. For example, if one were to compare the rooster perching on a boulder in Rosetsu's "Chickens among Roses" (*Bara ni kei-zu fusuma-e*) (in the collection of Muryôji temple, Illustration 32) with the rooster in Ôkyô's "Pair of Chickens" (*Sôkei-zu*) (in the collection of Yasaka Shrine), Rosetsu's sketch-work appears in no way inferior. On the contrary, we can even say that in Rosetsu's rooster, the tense beauty of the form, the acute look of its eye and beak, and the realistic depiction of such aspects as the way in which its feet grasp the boulder surpass Ôkyô's work. Even the unfaltering, fluid rhythm of the painted lines that describe the robes of the children, supported by the similarly accurate sketch-work, in "Chinese children engaged in the Four Accomplishments" (*Karako kingoshoga-zu fusama-e*; in the collection of Muryôji temple) makes me want to dub him "Edo's high priest of feathers." The humor of these children and puppies painted by means of that sort of line-work is that the atmosphere of a temple-based kindergarten (*terakoya*) is being offered in the guise of classical imagery.

One can understand Rosetsu's intention of transferring this classicism that his painting style to some extent assumes to the intimate world of the common people. The lively appearance of animals such as monkeys, cows, dogs and birds can be found within Rosetsu's artworks in Nanki; the cute, playful puppies in "Chinese Children Engaged in the Four Accomplishments," and the weasels that display a look of mischievousness among the morning glories in "Morning Glories" (*Asagao-zu fusuma-e*; in the collection of Sôdôji temple) are a few examples. Among them, "Tiger" (*Tora-zu*; Plate 36) at Muryôji temple, an image that has recently received critical attention, proves him to be the foremost specialist in "animal painting" since Sôtatsu. In a close-up shot, Rosetsu focuses upon a tiger as it leaps towards its prey. The entirety of its body fills the three sliding-doors upon which it is painted, and this scale has a startling effect upon viewers. At the very least, I believe that this sort of expression is an iconoclastic image that cannot be found among conventional paintings of animals and that this is the product of Rosetsu's sense of freedom after having distanced himself from Ôkyô's watchful eye. The only aspect that bothers me is that this tiger completely lacks the awesome presence

of a ferocious beast; rather, it has an innocence that reminds me of a housecat. In this way, I agree with the view of Mr. Yamagawa Takeshi, who says that "I don't think that Rosetsu tried to paint a tiger and found that he couldn't, because I have seen paintings of virile tigers by him at such temples as Saikôji in Matsue City and Yakushiji in Nara. I can only imagine that Rosetsu, an ironic artist, painted an enormous housecat with secretly whimsical intent." This kind of eccentric expression by Rosetsu can also be seen in such works as "White Monkey atop a Boulder" (*Iwajô hakuen-zu byôbu*; in the collection of Sôdôji temple; Plate 38), in which the artist sits a white monkey humbly atop a pyramid-shaped boulder that resembles a slagheap, and also in "Whaling" (*Hokei-zu*; Illustration 34), found within the *Changing Picture Folding Screen* (*E-kawari byôbu*) in which the lower half of the picture plane is entirely covered with ink in order to signify the presence of a whale.

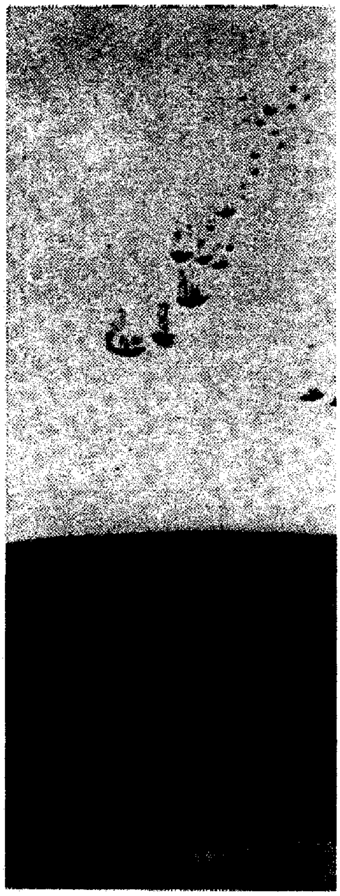


Illustration 34. "Whaling," from the *Changing Picture Folding Screen*.

"Dragon" (*Bokuryû-zu fusuma-e*; Plate 37) at Saikôji temple in Matsue City, a work thought to have been produced around the time when he traveled to Nanki, shows the twisting and turning body of a dragon painted in the *tsuketate* method with diluted ink. The image covers the expanse of four sliding-door panels and was painted in a single breath. Like an example of *garyô tensei* (completing a dragon painting by adding the pupils), Rosetsu used concentrated ink only on the eyes, thereby drawing attention to them. Even now, on occasions such as Green Day (*midori no hi*), sidewalk painters attempt to paint a dragon's form in one brushstroke, making the obligatory scream as they do so, and one can probably say that the origin of this superhuman feat was somewhere around the time of Rosetsu's dragon painting.

What I felt in looking over all of the artwork by Rosetsu that still remains in Nanki is that many works strangely lack any sense of depth. That element is particularly noticeable in his figure paintings, such as "Daikokuten" (*Daikokuten-zu*; in the collection of Mr. Sayama, Plate 35) and "Zhongkui" (*Shôki-zu*; in the collection of Mr. Okamoto), in which the figure is facing directly towards the viewer. Like the image printed on a piece of Kintarô candy, the face lacks any sort of three-dimensional relief. This sort of two-dimensionality is found not only in figure paintings but also in "White Prunus" (*Hakubai-zu*; in the collection of Mr. Norioka) and in the boulder in "Chicken among Roses" (*Bara ni kei-zu*; in the collection of Muryôji temple) which uses line-work together with the technique of *tsuketate* which makes certain objects appear to protrude, but nothing depicted seems to have any sense of depth. Even in the "Tiger" (*Tora-zu*), the extreme close-up of the face does not give enough of the impression that it is coming forward and attacking.

In a portrait depicting the artist (Illustration 35), both eyes are properly painted, so I can't immediately believe the legend of the "one-eyed dragon," but the idea that the sight in one of his eyes was weakened and that he was unable to clearly perceive depth seems plausible.

One can say that Rosetsu's production in Nanki, by adding subjectivity and expressiveness to the painting techniques that he learned from Ôkyô, expresses Rosetsu's desire to surpass his teacher's painting style, and later, his work developed more or less along these lines for more than ten years until he died at the age of 46. As seen in examples such as the crows in "Flock of Birds among the Waves and Rocks" (*Iwanami Gunchô-zu fusuma*) (in the collection of Yakushiji temple, Illustration 33) and the monkeys in "Group of Monkeys" (*Gun-en-zu fusuma*; in the collection of Daijôji), Rosetsu's specialty as a "painter of wildlife" was increasingly displayed through caricatures reminiscent of "The Frolicking Animals Handscroll" (*Chôjû Giga*) painted

Illustration 35. "Portrait of Rosetsu."

with free and witty brushwork. In such works painted near the end of his life as "Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai" (*Gama Tekkai-zu sôfuku*) (in the collection of Mr. Kometa, Illustration 36) and "The Four Sleepers" (*Shisui-zu*) (in the collection of Sôdôji temple, Illustration 37), the automatic character of his line-work became increasingly noticeable, and it seems almost as if his arm were being pulled along by the brush. One can find an example of his surprising imagination in works like "Chinese children at play" (*Karako yûgi-zu byôbu*) (Plate 39), in which the heads of

Illustration 36. "Liu Haichan and Li Tieguai." Collection of Mr. Kometa.

Illustration 37. "The Four Sleepers." Collection of Sôdôji Temple.

children, lined up like a long string of rosary beads or like an army of political demonstrators, gradually diminish into the background by means of perspective reminiscent of stereoscopic pictures (*megane-e*).

In Rosetsu's late works, however, we find the element of grotesquerie that did not appear up until then. As an example, let me discuss the left half of a pair of 6-fold screens gilded and painted in ink which left Japan in the generation following the war and which is presently in the possession of a certain American collector. (This folding screen is difficult to title, but for the time being, I will call the left half "Extraordinary Vista on the Seashore" [*Kaihin kishô-zu*; Plate 40].) In it, the silhouette of strangely shaped beach rocks is roughly painted in jet-black ink upon the gilded background using the close-up technique at which he specializes, and the scene gives the viewer a kind of odd shock. It is believed that this bizarre view is based upon a scene of Matsushima island of Ki Province outside Katsu'ura harbor, and the inscription on this work says that it was produced after the 6th year of the Kansei period. Perhaps it is the record of a journey to the former province of Ki that, within Rosetsu's image, assumed this particular appearance. "The Four Sleepers" that I mentioned earlier has been identified through analysis of the writing style in the inscription to be, unlike other works in the collection of that temple, one of Rosetsu's late works, and accordingly, there is a kind of disgusting quality in, for example, the way the clothing of the figures are described with a tumbling, unmodulated line-work that reminds one of a pinworm as well as in the way the veins of the old man Fenggan (Japanese: Bukkan) are accentuated. "Depiction of the Hall of the Great Buddha in Flames" (*Daibutsu enjô-zu*) (in the collection of Mr. Kishimoto) is Rosetsu's impression, painted in a sketchy style, of an event in the 10th year of Kansei (1799), when the artist was 45 years old.[2] In July of that year, the Daibutsuden hall of Hôkôji temple in the Higashiyama district of Kyoto was struck by lightning and caught fire. The flames, shown in a faint red, create an eerie atmosphere like that of a will-o'-the-wisp. In addition, "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman" (*Yamauba-zu*; Plate 41) at

[2] Translator's note: Here, Tsuji mistakenly writes "the 10th year of *Kan'ei*," which would correspond to 1625.

Itsukushima Shrine is even touched upon in the novel *The Grass Pillow* (*Kusa makura)* by Natsume Sôseki and acknowledged as a masterpiece of grotesque painting from the Edo period. Accordingly, among all of Rosetsu's artworks, "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman" has the most theatrical tension, and I know of no other example of Japanese painting (*nihonga*) in which the tremendous sense of obscenity regarding age and ugliness is painted through such orthodox methods as this. As opposed to Shôhaku's bizarre portraits of Hanshan and Shide and of immortals, who live in a transcendental realm, Rosetsu's image of the Mountain Woman, as has been indicated by others, has a sense of realism that arises from the vulgar realities of life as a commoner. However, without the influence of the bizarre images by Shôhaku, who left this world when Rosetsu was 28 years old and whose fame rapidly developed thereafter, I doubt that this image of the Mountain Woman would have been born.

This idea may be refuted by fans of Rosetsu's paintings, but I think that, in terms of originality, he somewhat pales in comparison to Jakuchû and Shôhaku. I do not mean to scorn the fact that he was a follower of his teacher Ôkyô, but if I were to criticize Rosetsu, I would say that, in focusing upon his own various eccentricities and trying throughout his entire life to escape from them, he absorbed too perfectly the painting style of his teacher, and ultimately it seems that Rosetsu was not able to remove himself from Ôkyô's "water." Likewise, in his devotion to grotesquerie during his late years, it seems fair to say that Rosetsu was following in the footsteps of Shôhaku's talent, and ultimately he could not avoid being derivative. Nevertheless, Rosetsu's claim to fame, most clearly shown in the several works he produced in Nanki, is nothing less than his exceptionally prominent skill as a virtuoso of line drawing regardless of the scale at which he was working. In this respect, perhaps he should he be evaluated as an artist who revived the tradition of linear fine art within Japanese painting, previously exemplified by works such as the "Frolicking Animals Handscroll" and "the Shôgun Tsuka Scrolls," to express the world of the common people at the end of the 18th century. Also, among his bird-and-flower paintings and his paintings of Chinese beauties, there

are some truly witty and lustrous works, and I would like to imagine that, if Rosetsu had traveled to Edo and had tried to become an Ukiyo-e artist, perhaps he would have become a virtuoso on an equal with Tori'iki Kiyonaga and Kitagawa Utamaro. Anyway, one mustn't overlook the acute aesthetic sense of the residents of Kyoto in the Tenmei (1781-89) and Kansei (1789-1801) eras. In their distain for dull stagnation, they eagerly awaited Rosetsu's shocking dramatics as a champion, following Jakuchû and Shôhaku, of eccentric painting. These people embraced his agile images that shed the grime of traditionalism haunting Kyoto even now, and at the end of the Tokugawa era, their aesthetic sense was inherited by the citizens of Edo.

Chapter Five
Birds, Beasts and Mischief: Nagasawa Rosetsu
Plates

35. "Daitokuten." Collection of Mr. Sayama.

36. "Tiger," Muryôji Temple.

37. "Dragon," Saikôji Temple.

38. "White Monkey Atop a Boulder," Sôdôji Temple.

39. "Chinese Children at Play," left screen.

40. "Extraordinary Vista on the Seashore," left screen.

41. "Yamauba, the Mountain Woman," Itsukushima Shrine.

Chapter Six
The Bizarre Transformation of Cats at the End of the Edo Period: Utagawa Kuniyoshi

"Imagining that cats have morality, a quality which I suspect only humans find necessary, is the epitome of egocentricity. Cats eat whatever they want to eat and drink whatever they want to drink; perhaps this could be considered morality. Cats possess a more authentic lifestyle than humans, don't you think? They live nobly: they're lively, playful, and unattached to worldly things, and they possess not a speck of deceit in their hearts."
Uchida Roan, "*Baku no shita*"

When I read this quote, I had a feeling that Kuniyoshi would concur.
Suzuki Yoshikazu

In the Tenmei (1781-89) and Kansei (1789-1801) eras, during which artists such as Kiyonaga, Utamaro, and Sharaku were active, is called the "Golden Age" of *ukiyo-e*, and since then, the so-called late period of *ukiyo-e*, with the exception of the landscapes of Hokusai and Hiroshige, has been rated rather poorly as an excess of decadence and decay. Up until now, this has been the orthodox view of the history of *ukiyo-e*. However, it seems that we have arrived at a point in time at which we ought to gradually amend this way of looking at the history of *ukiyo-e*.

Mr. Ôno Yoshirô's collection of Kunisada prints, which was publicly exhibited several years ago, has been one opportunity to embrace this new awareness. This exhibition clearly expressed how an anti-classicist aesthetic, which could have been called "The Beauty of Imbalance" (*Anbaransu no bi*), and which was seen as the germ of works by Sharaku and the late prints of Utamaro, was warmly received by the talented artists who followed them and who pursued that aesthetic to its utmost extent. Furthermore, recent investigations by Mr. Hirosue Tamotsu and others has shed light on the work of an iconoclastic *ukiyo-e* artist by the name of Ekin who, even during the time period spanning from the end of the Edo period through the early years of the Meiji era,

transplanted the realm of the Tosa school onto the stage and produced Kabuki prints that overflow with the energy of tremendously intense coloration.

Even in the case of Hokusai, treating him as a pioneer of mere landscapes is, needless to say, rather one-sided; it is needless to say that the essential significance of his production of images was in the astonishing diversity of his visual vocabulary, which included everything from animals, plants and figures to goblins, as well as in his "eccentricity" (*kisô*), in other works, in the original wit and dramatic imagination that he displayed in any genre of painting. The name of Utagawa Kuniyoshi who, as an artist following in the tradition of Hokusai, displays inestimable work in this field of "eccentricity," has finally come to receive long-overdue attention in recent years due to earnest introductions by the British scholar Mr. Robinson and, within Japan, Mr. Suzuki Jûzô.

Kuniyoshi was born at the home of a dyer (*somemonoya*) in the Nihonbashi district of Edo in the 9th year of the Kansei era (1797). He was a lively "Edo kid." He was precisely the same age as Hiroshige, and he was 37 years younger than Hokusai. When he was 12 years old, as a legend goes, Utagawa Toyokuni, a friend of Kuniyoshi's father, saw him draw a picture of Zhongkui (Japanese: Shôki) the Demon Queller and, acknowledging the boy's extraordinary talent, took him on as an apprentice. Later, when he was 18 years old, the *gôkan* book *The 47 Loyal Retainers* (*Gobuji chûshingura*) was published, and this is believed today to be his debut work. This means that around this time, he began his apprenticeship as a member of the school of Utagawa, but upon looking at an entry made in the journal *Hirose rokusae zakki* during the 3rd year of the Ansei era (1856), the circumstances of his early days seem to have been quite terrible: "He fell into debauchery, and eventually he was abandoned even by his relatives…" It seems that the Bunsei era (1818-30), when he was in his twenties, was a trying period for him. Perhaps it was due to his behavior, but according to *Biographies of Artists in the Utagawa School* (*Utagawa retsuden*), during this time, he was not able to see the artist Toyokuni very much, and he was given no illustration work to do; instead, he simply

bided his time. On the other hand, Kunisada, who was the senior apprentice, produced many actor prints and portraits of beauties during this period. One day, Kuniyoshi happened to witness a group of geishas calling Kunisada "teacher." He was greatly aroused by this incident and henceforth dedicated himself to researching methods of image production.

What caught Kuniyoshi's eye were the yomihon novels, written by Bakin and illustrated by Hokusai, that received extremely high acclaim when they entered the market during the Bunka era (1804-18). Hokusai's yomihon illustrations during this period were for *Chinsetsu yumi harizuki* (Plate 43). As seen in that book, Hokusai's extraordinary imagination, stimulated by Bakin's magnificently bizarre ideas, offers a spectacle as if it had erupted. Certainly, these books are revolutionary works in the history of Japanese illustration. By enlarging his dramatic, expressive scenes overflowing with this vitality on the picture plane of his *nishiki-e* (brocade prints), which he produced in various formats such as triptychs and collaborative single-images, Kuniyoshi attempted to surpass Kunisada, who was still popular at the time as a well-known maker of beauty portraits and actor prints.

Around the 10th year of the Bunsei era (1827), Kuniyoshi decided to capitalize upon a current fad regarding the novel *The Water Margin* (*Suikôden*). He began to sell a series of single-image prints displaying the five characters such as Kao Shô and Rochi Shin, and he gave it the eye-catching name of *One of 108 Heroes from the Popular Water Margin* (*Tsûzoku suikôden gôketsu hyaku-hachi-nin no hitori*). It was an enormous hit, and ultimately he decided to extend the series and produce portraits of all 108 of the characters. Their vigorous designs were even appreciated as patterns for tattoos, and the artist's fame as "Kuniyoshi, Producer of Warrior Prints" suddenly skyrocketed. At the age of 30, at long last he rose to the pinnacle of stardom. After that, from the Tenpô era (1830-1844) through the Kôka (1844-48) and Ka'ei (1848-54) eras, his remarkable activity can be seen in every possible theme: not only warrior prints but also portraits of beauties, actor prints, landscapes, caricatures and even depictions of fish. His particular "eccentricity" (*kisô*) developed in proportion to his research on western-style forms of

expression, and particularly in the field of warrior prints, his landscapes and his caricatures, he displayed that element of his personality.

When Kuniyoshi's *Water Margin* series was receiving high praise from the public, Hokusai, on the other hand, was releasing his famous series *36 Views of Mount Fuji* (*Fugaku sanjû rokkei*), which also received an enthusiastic response. Kuniyoshi, who was inspired by these novel landscapes by the great superior who he adored, produced both the *Famous Sites in the Eastern Capital* (*Tôto meisho*) as well as the *View of ~ in the Eastern Capital* (*Tôto ~ no zu*) series immediately afterwards. It became a question of debate whether this *Eastern Capital* series, which one can say was based on the precedent of Hokusai's *36 Views of Mount Fuji*, was nothing more than a blatant imitation. One can say that Kuniyoshi offers a fine answer to this visual problem, an answer that is not inferior to that of Hokusai. He added his acute sense of composition and furthermore brought to the series his understanding of western-style painting techniques. However, what I myself would like to point out is that in these works Kuniyoshi also expresses his particularly fantastic creative endowments.

That quality of Kuniyoshi's appears in the most focused way in "The Eastern Capital: The Rendezvous Pine" (*Tôto shubi no matsu*) (Plate 44). What people call the Rendezvous Pine is located in the area of Kuramae on the west bank of the Sumidagawa river, and this image is presumably seen from the boat which one would take when commuting to the Yoshiwara district. The scene of a corner of a stone wall upon which crabs and sea slaters squirm is oddly drawn as if one is approaching it, and the pine tree that is the subject of this print creates a suspicious shape as it looms up from behind the stone wall. On the other side of a strange, enormous rock - I imagine that it is part of the crumbling wall – a boat and people are drawn in miniature, and the bridge in the even further distance looks as small as a poppy seed. Because of this sort of unbalanced proportion between the foreground and background, the crabs and sea slaters appear to have bathed in radioactivity and swollen up to become strange creatures, and this impression is dramatically heightened all the more by the disturbing shadows of the

enormous boulder in the foreground as well as by the strange appearance of the "western-style" clouds shaped with tones of indigo. The silhouette of the enormous dandelion that peeks in from the upper edge completes the surreal atmosphere of this image.... The same kind of fantasia also appears the slimy clouds in the sky of "The Eastern Capital: View of Mitsumata" (*Tôto: Mitsumata no zu)* as well as in the disturbing silhouette of what appears to be a sea goblin at an Imado pottery kiln in "Famous Sites at the Eastern Capital: Asakusa Imado" (*Tôto meisho: Asakusa Imado).*

This kind of unusual connection between western-style expression and fantasia as found in the *Eastern Capital* series creates an even more unique expression in "The Brave Woman Okane of Ômi Province" (*Ômi kuni no yûfu Okane*) (produced ca. Tenpô 5 [1834]; Plate 42). A physically powerful prostitute (*asobi-me*) named Okane was at an inn in the Kaizu area in the province of Ômi. One day, a horse that dipped its legs into the lake and chilled them suddenly began to rampage, but when Okane, without even the slightest struggle, stepped on the horse's reins, the horse immediately calmed down. Kuniyoshi presents this classic tale that originally appeared in *Collection of Old and New Writings and Discussions* (*Kokin chobunshu*) in an eccentric, western-style setting. A belt of fantastic clouds, expressing a strange longing for western Europe, gushes forth from the odd-looking, distant mountain range and, as it swirls back down towards the horizon, fills the blue sky spread out over the quiet water of the lake. The fluffy mane, the whirling tail, and the gray-brown shading of the elegant horse that seems to have come from the copper etchings of Aôdô Denzen vibrate beautifully against the clouds in the background and further deepens the fantastic character of the picture. Among the arrangement of these essential tools, the main character Okane who, with her bull-neck, her slouching posture, and her long trunk, is surely made up to look like an archetypical *ukiyo-e* beauty of that time, and she is supposed to be striking a smart pose, but if you were to try covering this figure with your hand, I think you would understand what a powerful shock her out-of-place appearance in this dramatic event gives to the picture. I doubt that we could find another example of an artwork that expresses as symbolically as

this one does the bizarre encounter between Europe and Japan in the days of its isolationistic foreign policy.

These unique, western-style landscapes of Kuniyoshi, which currently are receiving high praise, seem nevertheless to have not received as enthusiastic a reaction at the time they were first made as one might have expected. Hiroshige's series *Famous Sites at the Eastern Capital (Drawn by Ichiyûsai)* as well as his *53 Sites along the Tôkaidô* (*Tôkaidô gojûsan tsugi*) were released at precisely the same time. Since they had a familiar lyricism, they captured the popularity of the people of Edo, and probably as a result, Kuniyoshi's landscapes were overlooked. Ultimately, Kuniyoshi appealed to the public by returning to his triptych warrior prints, his essential repertoire, and filling them with increasing eccentricity (*kisô*). From the end of the Tenpô era (1830-44) through the Kôka (1844-48) and Kaei (1848-1854) eras, this undertaking gave birth to his many, unique figures of the Bizarre (*kikai no zugara*).

Here, Kuniyoshi's ingenuity revolutionized the compositions of his triptychs. In conventional triptychs, the artist combines single images, and each image is designed so that a viewer can appreciate it as an independent work as well, so the overall compositional unity of the triptych is weak. In contrast to this, Kuniyoshi envisioned the three panels of the triptych as a continuous, wide screen upon which he could develop ambitious, original compositions. Most characteristic of this body of work are images which, by means of close-up shots of strange fish and goblins, are meant to shock his viewers.

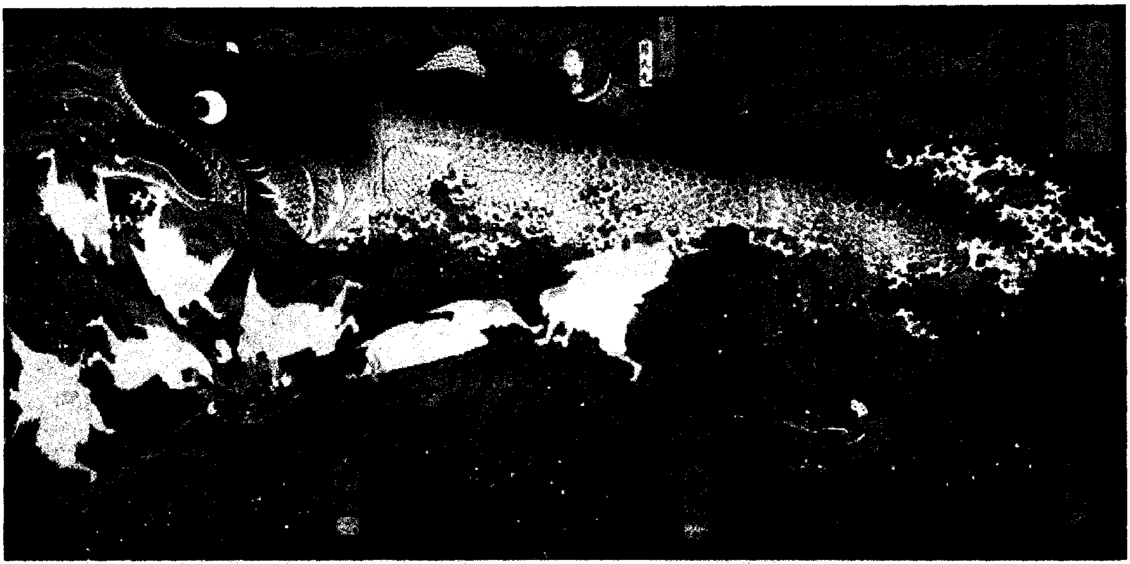


Illustration 38. "The Rescue of Minamoto no Tametomo by Goblins." Collection of Mr. Suzuki.

"Oniwakamaru Getting Rid of the Carp" (*Oniwakamaru no koi taiji*) (Plate 47) offers a shockingly nightmarish depiction of an enormous, monstrous carp. Both the theme and the composition of "The Rescue of Minamoto no Tametomo by Goblins" (*Sanki-in kenzoku o shite Tametomo o sukû-zu*) (Illustration 38) is clearly owes a debt to Hokusai's illustrations for *Chinsetsu yumi harizuki*, but the grotesque realism of the *wanizame* (alligator shark), whose seemingly metallic scales and saw-like teeth are vividly shown, is probably a product of Kuniyoshi's imagination triggered by some elaborate etchings of fish printed in a kind of illustrated biology text that was imported from Holland. A seed for the skull that appears in a disturbing way from out of the darkness in the print "The Former Palace at Sôma" (*Sôma no ko'o-sho*) can also undoubtedly be found among the Dutch anatomical illustrations that were reprinted in Japan at that time. Mr. Suzuki Jûzô points out that the chimerical (*kisô tengai*) manifestations of the fantastic scenes originating from these sort of scientific illustrations can also be found in the illustrated books of Kunisada (1786-1864) and Katsukawa Shuntei (1770-1820). It is the irony of fate that the development of verifiable science in Europe are to thank for the bizarre expressions produced by *ukiyo-e* artists active at the

end of the Tokugawa era, but the extraordinary curiosity and enduring imagination found in these novel works is certainly admirable.

In articles published in *The Chronology of Edo* (*Bukô nenpyô*) during the first year of the Kôka era (1844) and the 2nd year of Kaei (1849), a famous entertainer named Takezawa Tôji who spun tops (*koma-mawashi*) for his performances. He built a large shack at the west end of Ryôgoku Bridge, and there he combined top performances with magic shows and also focused upon unusual mechanics such as spring-loaded *karakuri* (mechanical dolls). It has been recorded that his performances were enormously popular. Also, in the first year of the Man'en era (1860), organized a puppet performance beside the Niô gate at Asakusa Temple with characters such as corpses and ghosts, and this is also recorded in *The Chronology of Edo*. Kuniyoshi's single-image print known as "The Top Goblin" (*Koma no bakemono*) (Plate 45) possibly depicts this sort of roadside performance, but the eccentricity of his expression is entirely unique. It seems to depict the Great Bright God Inari (*Inari Daimyôjin*) assuming the role originally played by Takezawa Tôji and trying to vanquish a vengeful ghost by means of both his saving grace and his skill at spinning tops. Whoever the characters may be, a strange scene reminiscent of a ghost story is developing in a decayed graveyard, and in the upper right corner appears a vivid, eye-catching close-up of a ghost's face. While the composition of this kind of work is iconoclastic, a crucial factor that gives this picture such a bizarre feel is its dramatic imbalance of technique: while the depiction of the background is left in the flat style of *nishiki-e*, the face of the ghost has a realistic, three dimensional look typical of modern prints. If the disturbing tension caused by this sudden contact between modern and pre-modern were something that Kuniyoshi consciously calculated, it is nothing short of laudable.

Both Kuniyoshi's interest in western-style shading techniques as well as his interest in the Bizarre further increased, and eventually, that combination gave birth to abnormal landscapes like "Enoshima Island in Sagami Province" (*Sôshû Enoshima no zu*) (Plate 48). In making the composition of this continual triptych, Kuniyoshi visited the actual site to make drawings from observation, and some of the sketches remain, but they

are nothing more than ordinary sketches. Nevertheless, the final version, with its strange gradation, dismal, gray-brown coloration and garish chiaroscuro, seems to have been handled by the "goblins" of Enoshima.

It is said that Kuniyoshi took precious care of the western paintings and illustrated newspapers that he had struggled to gather. He displayed them to those who visited his home, bragged about this and that, and sighed that he had not yet been able to follow the example of these artists. The series *Artifice Pictures* (*Kufû-e*) (including "People Consolidate into a Person" [*Hito katamatte hito to naru*], "He Looks Scary, but He's a Really Good Guy" [*Mikake wa kowai ga tonda ii hito da*], "He's a Person who Made Fun of People" [*Hito o baka ni shita hito da*] [Plate 49], and "A Ghost of Layers" [*Kasane no bôkon*]) was produced during the Kaei period (1848-54), and in them, nude bodies are combined to form portraits and ghosts. This series is thought to be an adaptation of the representative "composite face" portraits by Giuseppe Arcimboldi (1527 – 93), images of which Kuniyoshi perhaps possessed in his secret collection. Here, Kuniyoshi's wit, with which he clearly exchanges the elements of bizarre fantasia originating from Europe with purely Edo designs such as *fundoshi* (loincloths) and *chonmage* (topknots), seems worthy of attention.

The famous caricature series entitled "Graffiti on the Walls of the Treasure House" (*Nitakaragura kabe no muda gaki*) (Illustration 39) was produced in the Kaei period as well. Like the nickname "Nail pictures" (*kugi-e*) relates, these are actor portraits that parody graffiti scratched into the walls of a warehouse with a nail, and Kuniyoshi's decision to directly transfers to his print the interesting visual quality of the scratched lines was surely a startlingly new idea at the time. It certainly would not hurt to

Illustration 39. "Graffiti on the Walls of the Treasure House." Collection of Mr. Suzuki.

Illustration 40. From *Shô 'utsushi Hyakumensô*. Collection of Mr. Tsuihiji.

say that the history of modern comic books begins here. From the early years of the Tenpô era (1830-1844), Kuniyoshi worked on many jobs drawing these kind of caricatures and cartoons, and one can say that his talent as a cartoonist to make people laugh out loud was even greater than that of Hokusai. Other examples such as "Goblin Chushingura" (*Bakemono chushingura*) (produced in the first years of Tenpô) and the book *Shô 'utsushi hyakumensô* (printed in the 4th year of Tenpô, Illustration 40) further reveal his superior sense of humor.

At this time I need to discuss Kuniyoshi's bold activities as a satirist.

This repertoire that, in the opinion of ukiyo-e artists, to whom popularity among Edo residents of the chonin class was of supreme importance, is charming but safer to avoid, leaves behind such genres as that of warrior prints and historical depictions;

known as *Satori-e* (or *Hanji-e*), these images deal with political satire. This work closely resembles tightrope walking: an artist must blur his message enough to avoid catching the attention of the authorities yet make it clear enough for buyers to immediately understand and appreciate it. Precedents such as the imprisonment of Utamaro during the Kansei era clearly show how dangerous the risk was. The collapse of the feudal system was imminent, and at last, among the troublesome social conditions, it seems that the one who became the spokesperson for the people's rising distrust of the military government was none other than Kuniyoshi. The reason why it seems so is because, while he was truly committed to this work, he behaved cleverly, and as a result, he avoided going to prison.

In the twelfth year of the Tenpô era (1841), Mizuno Tadakuni, a *rôjû* (an assistant to the shôgun who controlled the affairs of palaces, the court nobles and the *daimyo*) developed a thorough list of regulations regarding the speech and manners of the *chônin* class in Edo. Ukiyo-e was dealt with extremely harshly as a warning to others, and the publication of blatantly luxurious, multi-colored prints as well as *hanji-e* in which the names of warriors "since the Tenshô era (1573-1592)" were written or which contained misleading information were strictly prohibited.

Illustration 41. "The Earth Spider Manifesting Demons in the Mansion of Minamoto no Yorimitsu." Collection of Mr. Suzuki.

In the 14th year of Tenpô (1842), Kuniyoshi evaded this restriction and published "The Earth Spider Manifesting Demons in the Mansion of Minamoto no Yorimitsu" (*Minamoto no Yorimitsu kan tsuchigumo-saku yôkai-zu*) (Illustration 41). It is a triptych that presents the ill and bedridden Yorimitsu (948-1021) horrified by the countless goblins and other creatures that have invaded his dreams. This print became popular due to the public's interpretation of the imagery. According to that interpretation, Yorimitsu was thought to represent Shôgun Tokugawa Ieyoshi (1793-1853, reigned 1837-53), the figure Urabe no Suetake (a shôgun from the middle Heian era), who in this print displays his waterplantain-design coat-of-arms and who is shown as one of the Four Heavenly Guardians (*Shitennô*) watching over Yorimitsu, was believed to represent Mizuno Tadakuni, and the goblins were seen as symbolic of the Edo print dealers who lost business due to Mizuno's crackdown. Because of this popular interpretation, Kuniyoshi was arrested and questioned, but since none of these political references were actually included in the print itself, he ultimately avoided being charged.

That year, Tadakuni retired in disgrace, and this put an end to the cruel effect of the Tenpô Reforms, but Kuniyoshi was forever after marked by the authorities as a dangerous suspect. A written record of urban rumors published in the 3rd year of the Kôka era (1846) states that Kuniyoshi had no fear of defying the prohibition of actor prints, and again in the 3rd year of the Ka'ei era (1856), it was recorded that he used unnatural coats-of-arms in his images, depicted coats-of-arms on grotesque ghosts, and showed warriors carrying historically inaccurate weapons. Nevertheless, in the 6th year of Ka'ei (1853), during which Perry's ships arrived in Japan, Kuniyoshi released a diptych entitled "The Strange Pictures of Ukiyo Matabei" (*Ukiyo Matabei meiga kitoku)*, and yet again, this print caused a problem with the authorities. It is a work in which Kuniyoshi drew many characters who have escaped from the *Ôtsu-e* prints that depicted them and who have gathered to form a disruptive group. Censors suspected that the word "kan" dyed on the sleeve of a young falconer referred to Kanjô Kubô, a pseudonym for Shôgun Tokugawa Iesada, that the figure of Fuji Musume (one of the traditional characters of Ôtsu-e who wears a dress with a design of wisteria flowers, places a

wisteria branch on her shoulder and wears a hat) referred to Fuji no Eda, a politically influential person in Ô'oku (residence of the shôgun's wife), and that other characters symbolized various other, unsavory figures. Due to the speed at which this "rumor" propagated, the military government hastily decided to confiscate Kuniyoshi's printing blocks, and at that time, it seems that a triptych entitled "*Kitai namei ikanbyô ryôji*" that he had earlier released was also confiscated. In this print, patients with chronic medical problems such as pockmarks, lack of a nose, paralyzed legs, and a protruding posterior are crowded together around a dubious-looking female doctor, and there was a popular rumor that, among these patients, the crippled, young lady who wears a *setta* (a kind of thong) on one foot and a *zôri* (another kind of thong) on the other referred to Juhime (mistress of Tokugawa Ienari, 1803-04).

Since these events occurred after the artworks had passed inspection by the censors, Kuniyoshi was not accused, and responsibility was borne by the publisher, but a detailed report of Kuniyoshi's conduct ordered at this time by the town lord and conducted by detectives (*inmitsu*) still remains. It seems that, despite an elaborate investigation, they were ultimately unable to discover any noteworthy information, but among the details that they gathered, what is written about Kuniyoshi's personality is interesting; "he has several apprentices, and yet despite being an important figure in the world of *ukiyo-e*, he maintains a vulgar appearance. He has a frank temperament, and if he is interested in a request by a publisher, he will undertake the project regardless of the amount of the pay, but if he is not interested, no matter how enticing the conditions may be, he will turn the offer down. He has relatively few worldly desires." Also, regarding the artworks that caused Kuniyoshi difficulties with the authorities, it is clearly shown in the investigation records that the artist consulted with Kaibaya Sashichi (his *kyôka* penname was Umenoya Kakuju), a merchant who supplied feed to the Owari family (also known as the Bishû family, one of the three Tokugawa families). Just that year, an exhibition of calligraphy and painting was held at a restaurant near Ryôgoku Yanagi bridge, and it is said that at this event, Kuniyoshi performed something like an action painting, soaking the *yukata* he was wearing in ink and using it to paint a character from

The Water Margin on a sheet of paper the size of 30 tatami mats. This event was also organized by Kaibaya Sashichi. I believe that, as the hidden "idea man" behind Kuniyoshi's eccentricity, Kaibaya Sashichi deserves attention.

In the 2nd year of the Ansei era (1855), at the request of Madam Okamoto Sakura of the new Yoshiwara district, Kuniyoshi, then at the age of 59, produced the framed work "The Lonely House" (*Hitotsuya*) (Plate 46) and donated it to Sensôji temple. By luck, this large work was spared from both earthquakes and war, and currently, it is on display in the newly reconstructed hondô (main hall) of the temple. The image deals with the tale of the hag of Adachi, which is connected to Sensô Kannon's teaching about the importance of all sentient beings. The hag of Adachi was a creature beyond spiritual redemption who, having mistaken her own daughter for a traveler, almost murdered her. Due to the effect of the shading at which Kuniyoshi specializes, the image of the hag is drawn with sufficient power, and the artwork developed a reputation soon after it was produced. One could say that while Rosetsu's "Mountain Woman" reigned in the west, Kuniyoshi's "The Lonely House" dominated eastern Japan.

However, it seems that, from that point onward, he was cursed by an addiction to alcohol which paralyzed him, and he gradually lost his ability to overcome this obstacle and produce artwork.

In the 6th year of the Ansei era (1859), in accordance with the Japan-US Commercial Treaty, Yokohama opened its harbor. The next year, the first year of the Man'en era (1860), Kuniyoshi immediately released the triptych "Depiction of Honmachi district in Yokohama" (*Yokohama Honmachi no zu*), and here, as usual, he displayed his sensitivity to current events. The shopping arcade of Honmachi district is drawn in perspective, and in the background, the masts of the black ships floating at the offshore horizon warn of the coming of a new era. This was Kuniyoshi's final work. In March of the following year, the first year of the Bunkyû era (1861), he passed away at the age of 65 years old. It was seven years before the Restoration.

During his lifetime, Kuniyoshi supposedly said to his apprentices, "If, by any chance, I died and there was someone who tried to assume my name and continue my work thereafter, keep in mind that I will come back from the dead to haunt and starve that person to death." However, Kuniyoshi had the tender nature of an adoptive parent; many apprentices flocked to him and worked under his tutelage. Among them were artists such as Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-92), who dug out grotesque elements from within his teacher's style and developed a bloodstained, sadistic world. "Twenty-Eight Verses for Famous Murderers" (*Eimei Nijû Hachi shûku*) (published in the 2nd year of the Keiô era / 1866), the work of Yoshitoshi that best represents this side of his personality, is, as the title implies, an extremely violent work that deals with the theme of blood. It is quite comparable to the similarly sadistic images of Matabei that were presented at the beginning of this book, and I think that drawing an analogy between the conditions that gave birth to both of these artists would be an extremely interesting research topic. However, let us leave that subject for another occasion.

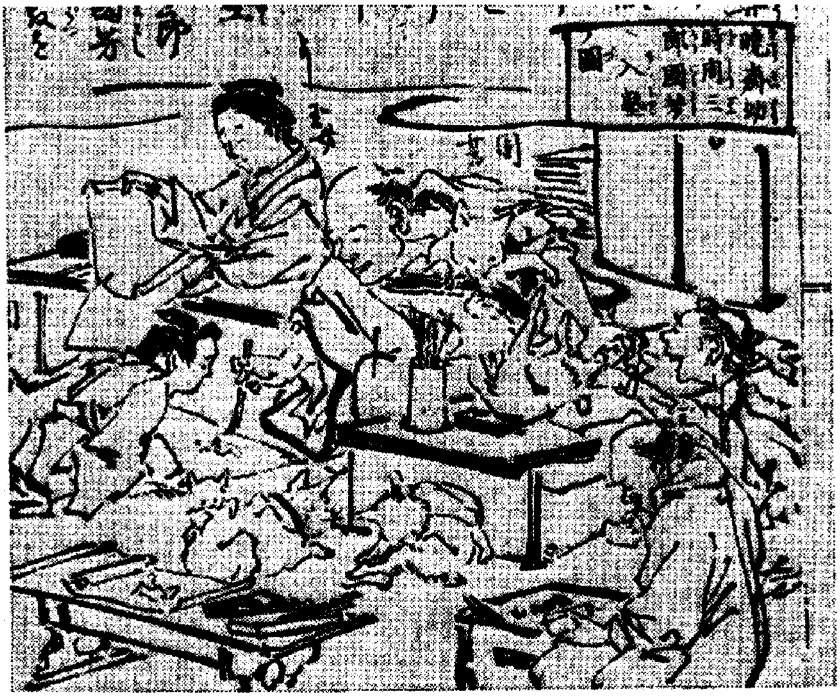


Illustration 42. An illustration from "*Kyôsai Gadan*" depicting a scene from Kuniyoshi's training studio.

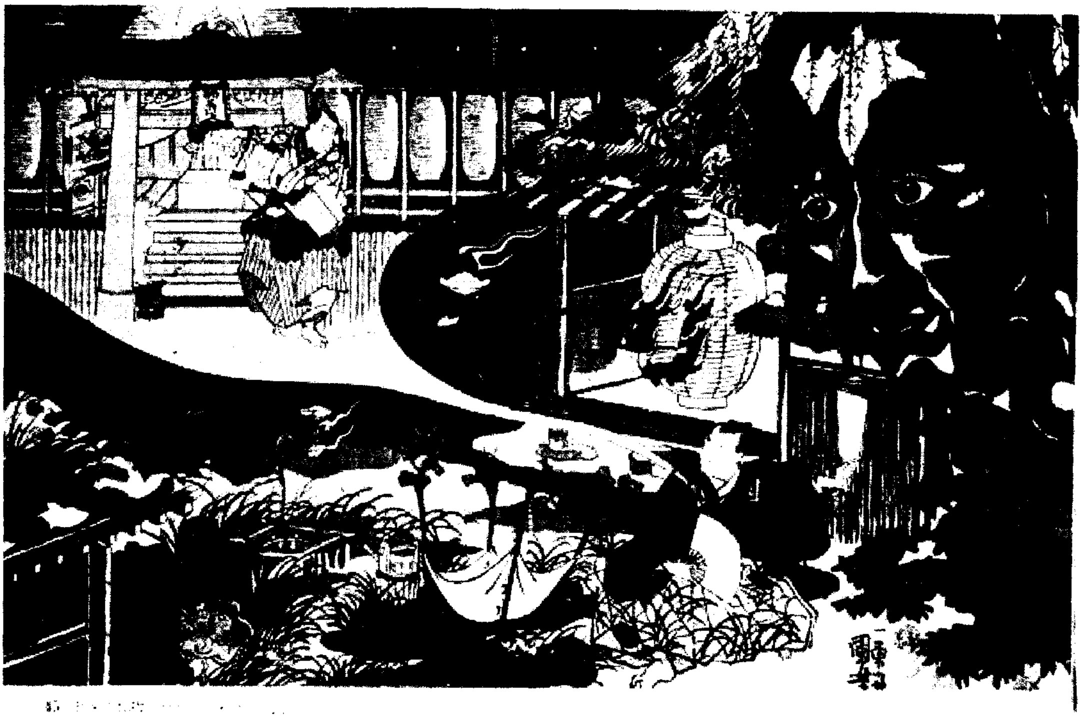
Lastly, I would like to add that Kuniyoshi was a fanatic cat-lover. In his studio, his cats asserted their control, and it is said that when Kuniyoshi was creating an artwork, he cradled several of them in his lap and talked to them (Illustration 42). He was skilled at anthropomorphizing plants and animals in his caricatures, but the creature that most often appears in those works is, without question, the cat. He always employed them as accessories in his portraits of beauties and had them peeking into the scene. In this way, he reminds one of Fujita Tsuguharu (1886-1968) and his cat. Kuniyoshi dearly loved his cats' self-centered impudence and their complete disregard for humans. I believe this fact offers many insights into his personality and artwork. Perhaps his admiration for the obstinacy of cats was also reflected in his attitude about the satire prints that caused him so much trouble with the military government.

Chapter Six
The Bizarre Transformation of Cats at the End of the Edo Period: Utagawa Kuniyoshi
Plates

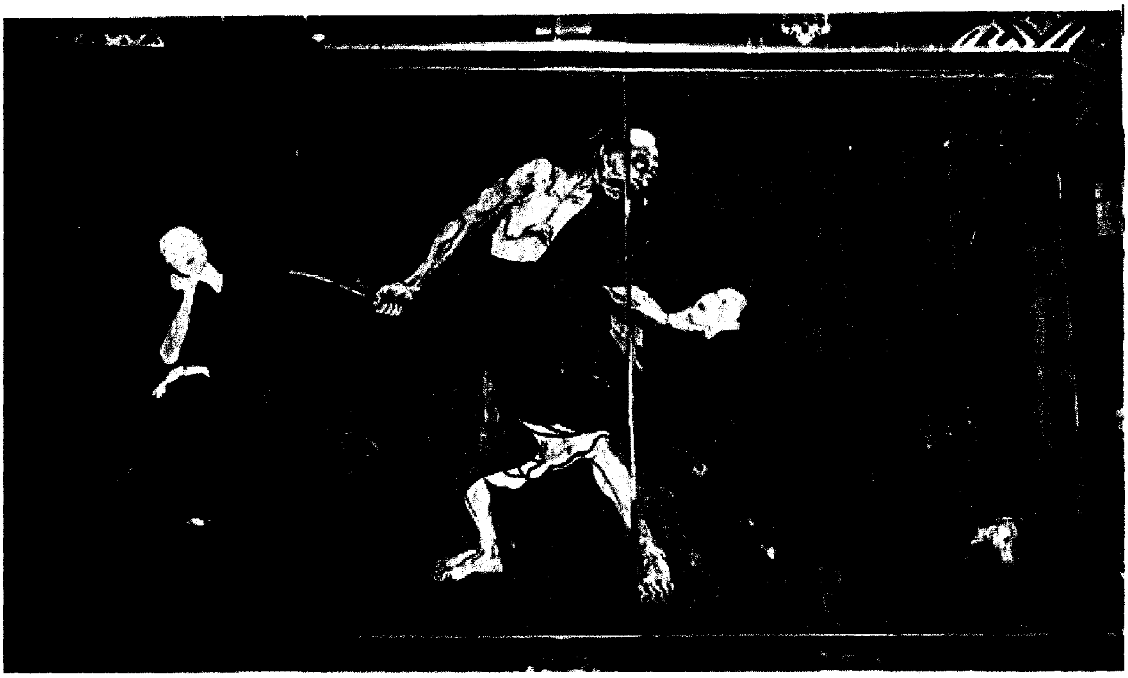
42. "The Brave Woman Okane of Ômi Province"

43. Hokusai, Illustration from *Chinsetsu Yumi Harizuki*. Collection of Mr. Suzuki.

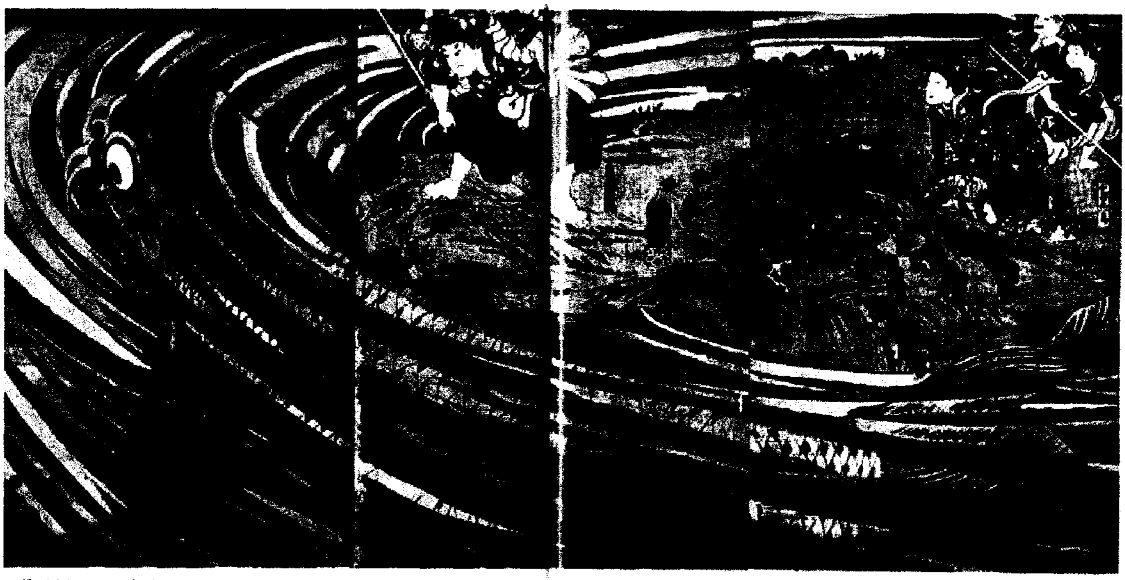
44. "The Eastern Capital: The Rendezvous Pine"



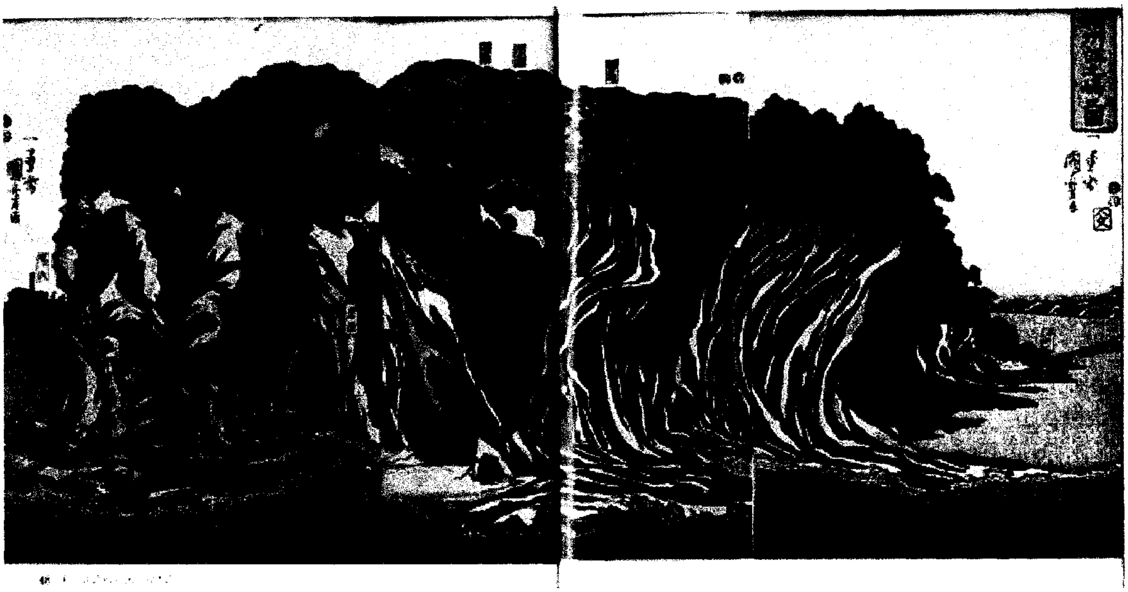
45. "The Top Goblin"



46. "The Lonely House"



47. "Oniwakamaru Getting Rid of the Carp"



48. "Enoshima Island in Sagami Province"

49. "He's a Person who Made Fun of People"

Afterword

The contents of this book were published as a series of articles entitled *The Lineage of Eccentricity: The Avant-garde of Edo* (*Kisô no keifu: Edo no abangyarudo*) in *Bijutsu techo* magazine from July through December last year (1968), and to this manuscript, I recently added a chapter on Nagasawa Rosetsu. It is intended to trace the lineage of artists during the Edo period who exhibited an expressionistic tendency - artists known for their production of eccentric (*kikyô*) and fantastic (*gensô-teki*) images.

Besides the six artists who appear here, one individual who I naturally ought to have discussed was Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), but because I myself was unprepared to wrestle with this grand figure, I merely touched upon his illustrated books in the chapter on Kuniyoshi. I'd like to announce that, thanks to the efforts of the publisher Bijutsu shuppansha under the direction of Mr. Suzuki Jûzô, the process of organizing and preparing to republish Hokusai's illustrated books, a still-unnoticed treasury of Hokusai's imagination, is making progress.

Regarding the title "The Lineage of Eccentricity," after searching here and there for a precise term that would accurately throw into relief the personality trait commonly shared by these artists, I stumbled upon the word *kisô* which, regardless of the degree of eccentricity, encompasses all of those free, original ideas that tear away at the husk of artistic convention. In this context, if we were to trace "the lineage of eccentricity" through a history of painting since the Muromachi era, the odd tendency for Sesson (b. 1504) to deform objects in his ink paintings can be seen as a prelude to this lineage. Next would be the images of enormous trees such as "Japanese Cypress" (*Sugi zu byôbu*) by Kanô Eitoku (1543-1590), which were called "bizarre" (*kaikai kiki*) in *History of Japanese Painting* (*Honchô gashi*), followed by the works "Cedar-door Painting at Yôgen'in temple" (*Yôgen'in sugido-e*) and "Depiction of the Gods of Wind and Thunder" (*Fûjin Raijin zu*) by Tawaraya Sôtatsu (active ca. 1602-30). Next would be "Red and White Prunus" (*Kôhaku-bai-zu*) by Ogata Kôrin (1658-1716) as well as works by other painters with whom Kôrin associated. The lineage continues on with Hakuin Ekaku

(1685-1768), Ike Taiga (1723-76), Uragami Gyokudô (1745-1820), Okada Beisanjin (1744-1820), and Tôshûsai Sharaku (act. ca. 1794) – all eminent artists who had a great influence upon the current of painting in the early modern era. If we describe the lineage in this way, we do not need to refer to such terms as branches or undercurrents; rather, we can safely call it the mainstream history of early modern painting. Furthermore, I think that this discussion of a lineage indicates that the great power which propels and advances this "mainstream" is, quite simply, the extremely deep aesthetic hunger of the common people.

We ought to regard the six artists discussed in this book as an avant-garde within that "mainstream." It has never been my intention to only emphasize their uniqueness as a heretical, fringe movement. This is why I have tried as much as possible to avoid using the adjective "heretical" in describing these artists. In order to emancipate it from the dull, lifeless format in which it is conventionally discussed – a format that offers nothing more than a jumbled history of various schools – the history of painting in the Edo period demands that it be viewed with a piercing gaze.

Presently, I am not well prepared for the challenge, but at any rate, I think that someone needs to do a comparison between these Japanese early-modern eccentrics and the lineage of Chinese eccentrics from the Ming (1368 - 1644) and Qing (1616 - 1912) dynasties – artists from the late period of the *seppa* movement (Ch: *zhe pai*), which was called "the school of eccentricity" (Jpn: *kyôtai-ha*), as well as Xu Wei (Jpn: Joi; 1521-93), Wu Bin (Jpn: Gohin; dates unknown), Gong Xian (Jpn: Kyôken; 1619 –89), Shitao (Jpn: Sekitô; 1642 – 1707), Bada Shanren (Jpn: Hachidai Sanjin; 1626 – 1705), and those painters known collectively as the *Yangzhou baguai* (the Eight Eccentrics from Yangzhou; Jpn: *Yôshû hakkai*). It is a very interesting subject.

Originally, my inspiration for writing this kind of unprecedented book was a curiosity about how viewers would respond if one were to place the most avant-garde artistic production in existence today – comic books, poster art, and murals, which are arenas of powerful expression – alongside works with which they share strange similarities – these often overlooked artworks of the "school of eccentricity" (*kisô-ha*) –

and exhibit them together in a location where viewers could conveniently encounter them. More than in this clumsy text of mine, I place my hopes in the persuasive ability of the works themselves as they are displayed here.

Incidentally, one thing I would like to touch upon here is that, while many of the collectors and art specialists in Japan who own artworks such as those that appear in this book are greedily lining their pockets, those artworks are being sold at an alarming speed to foreign buyers. For example, the charming works of artists such as Jakuchû, Shôhaku, Rosetsu, Beisanjin recently appeared in the classical-art market, and to my regret, most of them – one can say almost all of them - were taken home in the hands of enthusiastic fans from America. Factors such as nationality make no difference, but perhaps we would feel more satisfied if these works were taken care of in the homes of people who really appreciated them rather than if they were in the homes of calculating individuals who collect classical art as a kind of financial investment. I wonder if our need to travel to America in order to view representative works of Japanese art may lead to troubles in the future. All of you Japanese collectors out there, "it's not too late," so wake up!

For the benefit of those scholars who want to continue this research, at the end of this book, I have included a list of literature, not only a bit of my own but also that of the many colleagues from whom I received various valuable suggestions and materials in the process of writing this book.

Summer 1969

Tsuji Nobuo

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